

*The Collected Poems
of
Josephine Preston Peabody*



WITH A FOREWORD BY
KATHERINE LEE BATES

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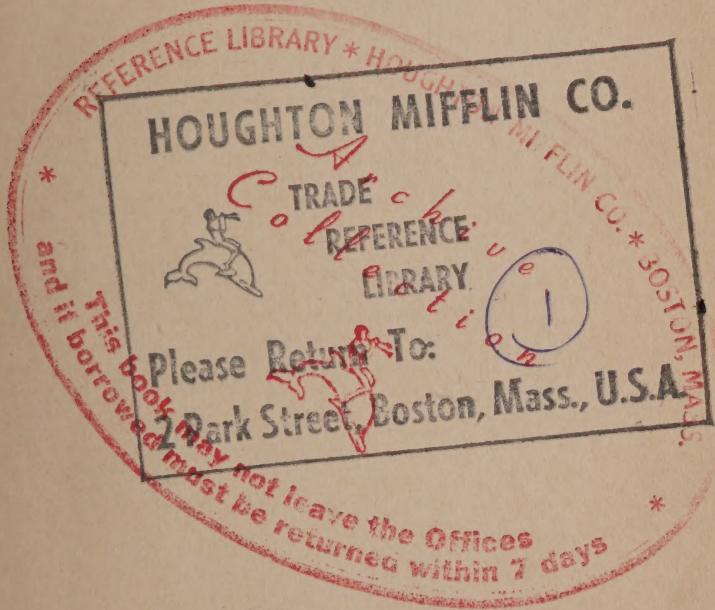
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THE COLLECTED POEMS
OF
Josephine Preston Peabody



Josephine Preston Peabody.

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OF
Josephine Preston Peabody
(Mrs. Lionel S. Marks)

WITH A FOREWORD BY
KATHERINE LEE BATES



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FOREWORD

THE publication of the *Diary and Letters* of Josephine Preston Peabody has stimulated the desire for a comprehensive edition of her poems and plays. The present volume gives her collected poems as printed in *The Singing Leaves*, *The Book of the Little Past*, *The Singing Man*, *Harvest Moon*, earlier lyrics and idyls issued in *The Wayfarers* and *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, together with some forty songs garnered from magazines and manuscripts.

The *Diary and Letters* attests the fact, so well known to those who felt the glow of the living presence, that Mrs. Marks was essentially a poet.

‘In her heart

Poetry was seeded and bore its part,
A rose-red fragrance, in life's whole garden.
She lived in ardors.’

She was indeed one of those singing spirits that no trouble can defeat. The desert rains down manna; they prove the miracle of beauty from ashes. Their poetry is not shut up in ink-well, but overflows into all event and circum-

stance. With Josephine Preston Peabody poetry was ever in her action as in her radiant look. When 1800 gave place to 1900, for instance, the midnight trumpets found her holding up a red rose that it might 'see two centuries.'

All the arts attracted her. From first to last she delighted in modelling. 'Clay and I get on capitally.' She caught at every chance for lessons in drawing, sketching, painting, and the fervor with which she pursued these avocations did not cool. Her record for a January day six years before her death reads: 'Simply *mad* with the discovery of the joys and raptures of rapid line studies in charcoal.' She was still modelling, still longing 'to paint and draw every odd waking minute.' But fundamental to all her life and work was music, the 'real Revelation' to her 'of Art in its most vital, present, possible sense.' 'Human nature has to live in music, in order to live at all.' As a girl she haunted the Boston Symphony concerts. Wife and mother in her bewitching Cambridge home, she made music 'the first business of the day.' Several of her songs were published with her own settings. Even as a housekeeper her principle was Rhythm rather than Routine.

Many poets and more critics have essayed a definition of poetry. To Josephine Preston Peabody poetry was 'the richest expression of noblest ideals.' She soon discovered that her own tendencies were lyrical and dramatic rather than descriptive. Looking over her early work, she notes: 'The longer things almost invariably speak for themselves . . . while half the lyrics run into two voices. . . . Very few of the poems *stand still*. There's almost no plain narrative: no study of a picture: something is always going on.'

Success came to her swiftly and, it would seem to the on-looker, in lavish measure, though only the successful know from how many a 'pound of sour' is distilled the 'dram of sweet.' In a youthful scrapbook entitled *Pilgrim's Progress* she pasted, under the caption 'Pilgrim receives many courteous letters,' specimens of the magazine rejection slips that battered her girlish hopes. In less than nine months she bore the 'hard knocks' of 104 of these. Yet at fourteen she had verses accepted by periodicals of fair standing. The Atlantic, which was to print a number of her poems, brought out 'The Shepherd-Girl' just before she left her teens. Three

months later Scribner's, also to prove a frequent publisher, welcomed 'Sunset.' Her first acceptance from The Century was five years later, soon followed by her first from Harper's, hospitable thenceforth, especially to her songs of childhood. Her initial volume, *The Wayfarers*, met with an almost unbroken acclaim. Stedman promptly culled out nine of the poems for his American Anthology. The lyrics of her second volume, *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, issued two years later, were even worthier of the many friends they found. Stoddard claimed for the young author place in the front rank of living poets. But with this prentice work she, her own severest critic, was far from satisfied. Of *The Wayfarer* she wrote: 'It is young, it has plenty of defects, it is idealistic; it harps on the same ideas; . . . the very music of it has a sameness, I think, a keen and piercing voice — the far cry of youth inconsolable with homesickness and so far blameworthy.'

Elsewhere she writes of that 'overpowering homesickness for absolute Beauty as one's birthright.' Her conception of the poet was ever that of a knight errant of Beauty, — a knight whose chivalrous task was to rescue the captive:

‘To go out, sword at side and song in your mouth, knowing and believing that Beauty suffers imprisonment in every human spirit, that she waits and starves here, that she is almost dead there; that often enough she is so spent and tortured and dark you would not know her; to go forth unafraid, with the Beauty in your own heart longing after her — and to rescue, rescue, rescue, greet, restore.’

This aspiration was already embodied in *The Wayfarers*, but in forms often thin and vague. Her prefatory quatrain from the *Vita Nuova* is a key not only to the significance of the title-poem, but to the dream quality of the whole. ‘I would speak of things more distinctly human,’ she resolves, ‘and I would use a clearer speech.’

In her own favorite lyrics of *Fortune and Men’s Eyes*, ‘The Source,’ ‘The Quiet,’ ‘The Psyche in the Niche,’ ‘I Shall Arise,’ ‘In the Silence,’ ‘Stay-at-Home,’ ‘The Beloved,’ thought and feeling are more definite, but the reviewers gave main attention to the play and the dramatic monologue with their flavors of Shakespeare and of Browning.

In *The Singing Leaves* the lyrist comes to her own. She has attained that simplicity of folk-

song which she had been seeking. The 'little gold thrills' in her brain find voice as charms and spells. These songs dance to a rhythm of emotion sometimes merry, sometimes wistful, like the blossomed sprays of April in a morning wind. There is magic in their very lilt. Yet all this harmony and even the spontaneity are rooted in the labor of her craft. Goldsmith and silversmith toil no less mightily than the hewers of wood and drawers of water. Even her titles underwent many changes in her notebook revisions — changes in the direction of the concrete or the alert, as 'Cakes and Ale' for 'Festival,' 'Come Buy!' for 'The Florist's Window.' As for the content of these melodies, they meet, as a whole, Arnold's test of 'so dealing with things as to awake in us a full, new and intimate sense of them, and of our relation with them.' Cherished, after their quarter century, in many a memory, one or another of these 'singing leaves' is sure to flutter into the newspaper columns that carry popular poems. Again and again the reader chances on 'The House and the Road,' 'Alms,' 'The Fir-Tree,' 'A Song of Solomon.'

In the original issue there were eleven poems

of child life, published later, with twenty-three others, as *The Book of the Little Past*, an illustrated volume for children. Here is not only the wonder of bright eyes looking out upon the various aspects of this world, but such assurance of love and such sensitive response to beauty as had rejoiced the singer's own budding season, long fresh in her consciousness. 'I felt as if I were a child,' once she wrote, 'to whom God himself had been turning over the leaves of a picture book.'

These lyrics, twinkling with humor though they are, unlock the heart of a tiny poet, — a lass, moreover, though such laddies as Blake and Wordsworth, Vaughan and Traherne, and many nameless boy mystics who, doomed to money-making careers, have shut the dreams of childhood into a hidden safe and forgotten the combination, would have found her a congenial playmate. The child so revealed is an original artist, beginning her drawing of the house with the chimney-smoke, singing her music-book upside down; a 'lover of all things alive,' the bubble-colored pigeons that coo just as bubbles would talk, sparrows and squirrels and her dog with rosy tongue, though already she has met the

teasing of human jealousy. There is a reason, if only a baby head could puzzle it out, why one loves grandmother in one way and pussy in another.

‘I wish she would not ask me if I love the kitten more than her.

Of Course I love her. But I love the Kitten, too; and It has Fur.’

With this outflowing affection goes a bewildered compassion for the suffering that cannot be concealed even from such tender souls as hers, shocked with a lasting hurt by sight of the slaughtered creatures of the market, the poverty glimpsed in the alleys, the weeping heard in the wind. From *The Singing Leaves* often peeps out this same child, only a little older. She it is who kisses the ‘patient forehead’ of the cart-horse in the side street; who loves her gowns and ribbons and her shoes that are wearing out:

‘Poor Hop-the-brook and Dance-with-me’;

who rebels against the studious fashions of Cambridge; the girl whose sympathy with all in trouble looks forth from a wild-rose face with fragrant cheer and healing.

‘Young Pity never knew the word
She gave to men in need.’

The Singing Leaves was in its sixth edition when *The Singing Man* appeared. In the earlier book the poet, pressed by anxieties for the future as well as by cares for the present, had written:

‘My home is not so great,
But open heart I keep.
The sorrows come to me
That they may sleep.

‘The little bread I have
I share, and gladly pray
Tomorrow may give more,
To give away.’

The eight years intervening had brought her shining gifts, — love, marriage, travel, motherhood and, through her prize play *The Piper*, modest fortune and international fame; but all the more in her abundance she would keep open house.

‘Belovèd, till the day break
Leave wide the little door
And bless, to lack and longing,
Our brimming more-and-more.

‘Is love a scantèd portion,
That we should hoard thereof? —
Oh, call unto the deserts,
Belovèd and my Love!’

The poet of *The Wayfarers* had lamented her 'lack of true experience about the typically human events.' These were now hers, weal and woe, for the gladness that since her marriage had been pouring into her 'as sweetness into the grapes,' the beauty of her home, 'beauty that descends upon our house as a glow and a garment,' had been attended by extreme severities of physical suffering. Her 'Canticle of the Babe' poignantly expresses the agony and the rapture of giving birth. Yet in this volume her personal joy is challenged not by personal pain, though she was never to be well again, but by distress for the masses toiling at mechanical, monotonous, soul-dulling tasks for daily bread, denied the creative zest that turns the heaviest labor into play. Most grievous of all to her new motherhood are the factory children 'broken in the bud,' the 'beauty of babyhood' flung out into 'weltering alleys.' Though her odes of shadow are the more elaborately wrought, it is inevitable, even as light is fairer than darkness, that the poems of captivating charm are those springing from the sunshine of her own beatitude. 'The Golden Shoes,' 'Alison's Mother to the Brook,' 'The Nightingale Unheard' are, with

certain of the interludes, the most enchanting of these confidences. Yet none the less through all the fountain leap and music of her happiness sounds the constant cry:

‘Wall not in my heart.’

She answered her own prayer, giving herself beyond the limit of her strength to calls and causes, speeches, benefit readings, public service of all sorts, for society is in conspiracy to wreck a writer’s chance to write. Her fame had become her enemy. In the heart-breaking years 1914–1918 she followed with exhausting intensity the clashes of the conflict, helping in whatever ways she could. She worked at first for the Belgian refugees, in whose behalf she read her ode ‘Pietà’ at a Boston mass meeting, and then on other lines of war relief, striving meanwhile to complete that cycle of ‘War and Women poems’ published in 1916 under the title *Harvest Moon*.

Considering the temper of the times, her war book contains little anger. It was hard for her to hate even the ‘Lords of Disaster,’ but she felt to the full and rendered without flinching the horror of the moonlit battle-field, the pathos of the fallen bell-towers, the air-raid’s awful use

of man's long-sought gift of wings. Impressed even in her girlhood by 'the martyrdom of womankind,' she is peculiarly alive to the share of mothers in the mad waste of war, — 'the Eternal Womanly bringing into this world with anguish, and feeding on love, the human material for all this slaughter.' In 'Full Circle' she bewails their tragedy; in 'Heritage' she pleads with the man-child to recompense his mother for her heroic pain by achievements more glorious than plunder and bloodshed; in 'The Neighbors' and 'Woman-Vigil' she calls upon womanhood to lead the way to light. The war theme is now and then relieved by a winsome poem of her own hearth, — 'Cradle Song,' 'Children's Kisses,' 'To a Dog.'

While the poet's mastery of metres and power of sustained appeal, as in the odic apostrophies of 'Hunter's Moon,' have developed with the years, the tone has deepened and saddened. Still her diction glistens with the words so characteristic of her own spirit, — light, golden, wild, fleet, blithe; still she coins her dainty compounds, — silver-blurred, shadow-dappled, lily-thrust, cloud-fleece, yellow-moted; still she fashions her tripping three-word phrases, — 'seek his more-and-more,'

‘Your to-and-fro of hope and wistfulness,’

but the fairy horn is faint, merged in the greater music.

Though the ‘out-of-doors’ was vividly dear to her, and her pictorial quality attested by many a landscape glimpse, she was not inclined to the crisp exactitude of imagist detail. She naturally spoke by parallel and sign. Such figures run as naturally into her letters as into her poems, though more frequently, in the familiar writing, colored by her indomitable gayety. Like another Friar Francis, she adjures her ailing body: ‘Brother Ass, rouse up now and show yourself Pegasus.’ She confides to her absent husband the inroad of cabbage-worm: ‘And me watering the garden myself each evening, like a faithful Deluge.’ In *Harvest Moon* are such exquisite phrases as ‘petals of moonlight’; such tender comparisons as that of her sleeping baby-boy’s heart to ‘a shut-in murmuring bee’; but the haunting metaphor is of the fatal harvest-field with its ‘unquiet gleanings,’ its

‘sheaves that still did writhe,
After the scythe.’

Her symbols are of nature’s own simplicity,

sun and moon and star, bird and brook, rose and tree and dew, and of primitive industries, the spinning-wheel and the loom, the sheepfold and the ship. Most significant of all to her imagination were wing and torch, symbols that became, in union, her chosen device, and stand as her poetry's true emblem.

Yet the Winged Torch does not tell all the story. That generous heart of hers embraced the hurt and helpless everywhere. Over wronged birds and beasts, uncared-for children, joyless toilers, suffering womanhood, war victims, outcasts, criminals, was the voice of her pity

‘Poured forth as wine.’

‘In the market place of Athens,’ wrote Pausanias, ‘is an altar of Pity, which divinity, as she is, above all others, beneficent to human life and to the mutability of mortal affairs, is alone of all the Greeks revered by the Athenians.’

True poet, eager artist, enraptured lover of beauty as Josephine Preston Peabody was, not the ecstasy of song, nor the passion for perfection, nor the Beatific Vision itself could wall in her heart from the footsore procession of humanity.

KATHARINE LEE BATES

THE SINGING LEAVES

A BOOK OF SONGS AND SPELLS

*'Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field. Let
us lodge in the villages.'*

(Published in 1903)

DEDICATION

WHOSOEVER cares to look
In my little Book,
If he care to look again,
Let him so; and then,
Should there be a very few ;
Glad to say Amen
To old wonders ever new,
— Why, it is for You.

THE HOUSE AND THE ROAD

THE little Road says Go,
The little House says Stay:
And O, it's bonny here at home,
But I must go away.

The little Road, like me,
Would seek and turn and know;
And forth I must, to learn the things
The little Road would show!

And go I must, my dears,
And journey while I may,
Though heart be sore for the little House
That had no word but Stay.

Maybe, no other way
Your child could ever know
Why a little House would have you stay,
When a little Road says, Go.

CHARM: TO BE SAID IN THE SUN

I REACH my arms up, to the sky,
And golden vine on vine
Of sunlight showered wild and high,
Around my brows I twine.

I wreathe, I wind it everywhere,
The burning radiancy
Of brightness that no eye may dare,
To be the strength of me.

Come, redness of the crystalline,
Come green, come hither blue
And violet — all alive within,
For I have need of you.

Come honey-hue and flush of gold,
And through the pallor run,
With pulse on pulse of manifold
New largess of the Sun!

O steep the silence till it sing!
O glories from the height,
Come down, where I am garlanding
With light, a child of light!

BEFORE MEAT

HUNGER of the world,
When we ask a grace,
Be remembered here with us,
By the vacant place.

Thirst, with nought to drink,
Sorrow more than mine,
May God someday make you laugh,
With water turned to wine.

SAD TRUTH

TRUTH I tell with heavy heart,
To another one,
Give me sweetness for your smart,
When sad time is done.

Then may I be clear again,
Love without disguise;
Since I have to bear, till then,
Dark of hostile eyes.

*Bitter shall be sweet some day.
Ah, but that is far away!
I must bind my heart and say:
Bitter now, but sweet some day.*

GLAD TRUTH

BEAUTIFUL, that did come true,
Beautiful, so it was you!
If forgiveness be for us
That we ever doubted thus,
Then forgive us radiantly,
All our doubts that are to be.
Now that we lay hold of you,
Nearer than we hoped or knew,
Dearer than we looked to find,
Beautiful, forgive the blind.

THE BIRD IN THE HAND

YESTERDAY has flown away
Far beyond the sun.
And of morrows, who can say,
Till another one?

Only Now is all my own,
And my heart knows how:
O wild wings for a sky unknown,
Mine, mine — now!

WAKING

EARLY in the morning,
Early in the dew,
Singing from the mountains
Where the dreams withdrew,
Lingered one I knew.

‘Soul, art thou so shining?
What is there to tell?
Whither hast thou journeyed?’
And the answer fell,
‘Early to the well.

‘Early, early, early,
To the farthest light;
Drinking, singing, bathing
In the cool, the might,
Whence I have my sight.

‘There I found my sandals
Gladdened with a wing;
And my fair apparel
Woven out of Spring.
Therefore do I sing.’

10 THE SINGING LEAVES

And the golden voices
Warming with the sun,
Dimmed the silver voices,
Fading, one by one.
And the dream was done.

THE MAGIC

YOU who saw through my disguise
Though I came so poor,
Let me bless your true two eyes
And your open door.
Yes, I am a wonder-child;
Hark and tell it not. —
With the journey and the cold
I had half forgot.

Take the charmèd seeds I lay
In your open hand:
Some would cast them all away,
You will understand.
Trust the bud to come to flower,
Trust the flower for fruit.
Listen in the winter-time
For a cricket lute.

Here are blessings all from me
— Though they look like tears —
For your blessed eyes that see
And your heart that hears.

I am higher than I seem,
Fair as I would be:
O, I bless your heart that hears,
And your eyes that see!

They were ragged gifts I showed,
But you took the sense
Of the bird-nest from the road,
And the lucky pence.
And for all the charms I leave
Every time I pass,
Simple folk will only see
Cobwebs on the grass!

ROAD-SONGS

I

AT home the waters in the grass
Went singing happy words;
But here, they flutter through my
hands
As silent as the birds.

I see a Rose. But once they grew
All thronging, thronging, — wild,
And red, and white, before I came
To be a human child.

II

WHILE I am resting by the road
So dully here apart,
Far-off my Angel laughs, maybe,
Where God shines round her heart.

O, she is laughing, as I think,
Because they cannot know
The parching wonder of the noon
With all our ways below.

14 THE SINGING LEAVES

They cannot know. But now and then,
They may let fall a song
Blown like a feather down to me,
Because the road is long.

THE CEDARS

ALL down the years the fragrance came,
The mingled fragrance, with a flame,
Of Cedars breathing in the sun,
The Cedar-trees of Lebanon.

O thirst of song in bitter air,
And hope, wing-hurt from iron care,
What balm of myrrh and honey, won
From far-off trees of Lebanon!

Not from these eyelids yet, have I
Ever beheld that early sky.
Why do they call me through the sun? —
Even the trees of Lebanon?

ALMS

I MET Poor Sorrow on the way
As I came down the years;
I gave him everything I had
And looked at him through tears.

‘But Sorrow, give me here again
Some little sign to show;
For I have given all I own;
Yet have I far to go.’

Then Sorrow charmed my eyes for me
And hallowed them thus far:
‘Look deep enough in every dark,
And you shall see the star.’

THE INN

WHEN I come back to sorrow,
The place seems very old.
Full well I know the lodging,
The meagreness, the cold;
And everything is told.

The common daily portion,
No ampler and no less;
And sorry worn the cup is
And full of humbleness:
A soul can say but, 'Yes.'

The earthen wares are many,
But never are they new.
The one-time guest departed
The same gray service knew.
There is no change for you.

SINS

A LIE it may be black or white;
I care not for the lie:
My grief is for the tortured breath
Of Truth that cannot die.

And cruelty, what that may be,
What creature understands?
But O, the glazing eyes of Love,
Stabbed through the open hands!

THE WATCHER

MY neighbor's grief is dark to me.
I gaze and dread, without;
And marvel how he lives to bear
The blackness, and the doubt.

And yet, by all lost ways of grief
That I have had to plod,
I know how small a rift lets through
A little gleam of God.

TO SAD-HEART

I HAVE a word for you,
For you, Sad-Heart,
And pray you keep it till the
 dawn come true,
And sorrow part.

I never bid you doff
A single care:
But ever till to-morrow, O, put off —
Put off Despair!

SONG AND NEED

HEART said, 'If I had wings,
Such wings as hath the lark,
Even as that freedom sings
Beyond the dark,
I too, if I could fly
From chains that weigh and cling
Ah, but then I could sing, —
Could I!

'O dayspring of desire!
Mid-ocean of delight
Before the dawn of fire
On dawn of sight!
My joy, could it undo
All that despair has done,
I could find out the Sun,
— I too.'

But ah, how vain to long
For glory of the lark,
Who hast more need of song
Down in thy dark;

Where chains may always irk,
 And every day's rebuff
 ... Leave thee scarce breath enough,
 To work!

Nay, never to assuage
 Our need, is joy begun,
 But follows some poor wage
 Full hardly won.
 Never vain wish shall bring
 The music from the dumb.
 Needs must — ere song will come —
 We sing!

To him who hath, late, soon,
 To him shall it be given.
 Make to thyself some boon,
 Some little heaven:
 Some feigning, through that mirk,
 The blue of upper skies;
 And sing — with blindfold eyes —
 At work!

HERE'S APRIL

WEARIED one,
Rest a little in the sun.
Here is April come behind you
With a blessing on your head:
Rains unshed,
And her loving hands that blind you
While she queries, 'Who am I?'
Of the darkened eye.
O, I heard the winter pass!
Came a sigh from waking grass
That should wake a daffodilly.
April, and up-rising now, — and every
kind of lily!

THE COMING

LOW in the west, the early star
Is hazed with fires of Spring.
Low in the east, the golden moon
Comes slowly westering.

The last-year leaves, they breathe and stir
With hope beyond their ken.
O golden fear! — that men must hear
All hearts wake up again.

MUSIC

O HEART of all things, Heart's Desire
 come true,
 That nothing may undo!
How long have I been stricken dim with fear,
Hungry and cold and lost, till I should hear
 You, — you.

‘Now fold me in, O Beautiful, most dear!
 And now that you are here,
Where were you, Dearness, — lost and far
 apart?
So far!’ — ‘Nay, all the time, O little heart,
 So near.’

EVER THE SAME

KING Solomon walked a thousand
times
Forth of his garden-close;
And saw there spring no goodlier
thing,
Be sure, than the same little rose.

Under the sun was nothing new,
Or now, I well suppose.
But what new thing could you find to sing
More rare than the same little rose?

Nothing is new; save I, save you,
And every new heart that grows,
On the same Earth met, that nurtures yet
Breath of the same little rose.

MAYBE

H EIGH-HO! The same old road it is,
And weary dull am I,
With the same old road and the same
old song
I hum and know not why.

But over yon, the city smoke
Goes after one gray dove,
With a flock of gold and silver wings
Along the sun, above.

And of the miry pools below,
The sparrows make the best;
And windows all, with dazzled eyes,
They stare into the west.

And I, I hum the same old song
Though no one could say why.
Maybe so, my singing knows
Even more than I.

THE SONG OUTSIDE

WHEN will you come, you maiden by
the window,
Come out and leave your little win-
dow, there?

Why will you bind your heart up every morning,
As every morning you bind your hair?
Your vine astir would wake a cloud of swal-
lows;

The sower's forth and every worker follows;
The world goes forth, to earn, to seek, to share!
Why is it, little face behind a window,
You do not dare,
You do not dare?

Then will you come, you maiden by the window,
To hear the heart of twilight in the air?
And will you heed the breathing of the wayside,
And all the wise, wide singing everywhere? —
And you and more than you, and more than
neighbor,
— With care and bloom, despair and wrinkled
labor,

THE SONG OUTSIDE 29

It folds, it holds them all, till they are fair;
— Fairer than you, my maiden by the window,
 And unaware,
 — All unaware!

THE PASSERS-BY

THOUGH the dawn bring grayest
thread
That my Fates have spun;
Though I lift not up my head,
Sorrow may not shun
The glory of the Sun.

Yea, and though the gold sands run
Fleet through afternoon,
Shadow, that will speed the Sun,
Brings me yet as soon
The glory of the Moon.

Blessèd Ones, and shining boon
Over all our wars!
Blessed we, by night or noon,
That no anguish mars
The glory of the Stars.

THE SAPLING

WHEN I was but a sprig of May,
With wonders to command,
Above all else I loved most well
What none could understand;
And dear were things far-off — far-off, but
nothing near at hand.

O, now it was the sunset isle
Beyond the weather-vane;
And now it was the chime I heard
From belfry-towers of Spain;
But never yet the little leaf that tapped my
window-pane.

Heigh-ho, the wistful things unseen
That reach, as I did then,
To guess, and wear the heart of youth
With eager Why and When!
And never eye takes heed of them, in all the
world of men.

THE HERO

I SAW the river going,
All silver to the brim,
Along the southern meadows
That were a home to him.

I sang, 'O River, bear him
My dream, a silver swan.
'Tis only he, all day, all day,
That I do think upon.'

And oh, my foolish heart forgot,
So rapt in heart's desire,
The years he has been sleeping,
Beneath a far-off spire.

NESTS

O SPARROW, sparrow, did you ever try
To build a nest high up where no
birds are,
And close unto a star,
Where it might cling and hear the wind go by?
For that did I!

And far and far I flew along the quest,
For shelter, and I passed the summer rain,
I saw the daylight wane;
I found among the stars no place of rest,
And built no nest.

Down to the Earth again with baffled wings,
The warm green earth where such as we must
stay.
But all the livelong day,
High over heaven my dream nest clings and
swings,
And my heart sings,
Sparrow!

SIDE STREETS

SOME days the faces in the street
Are clouded all, and dull;
And near or far, not one I see
To call it beautiful.

O heavy, heavy is my heart;
And is the spirit blind?
That I am stricken with a doubt,
Because of human kind.

Until I rest my looks upon
Some cart-horse standing by,
With patient forehead, weary mane,
And unreproachful eye.

And kiss him on the brow I do! —
Because I have a mind
To thank him just that he will be
So beautiful, and kind.

THE FIR-TREE

THE winds have blown more bitter
Each darkening day of fall;
High over all the house-tops
The stars are far and small.
I wonder, will my fir-tree
Be green in spite of all?

O grief is colder — colder
Than wind from any part;
And tears of grief are bitter tears,
And doubt's a sorer smart!
But I promised to my fir-tree
To keep the fragrant heart.

EARLY-HEART

EARLY-HEART tends no geese like ours;
Every one is a swan,
Fit to sing with a nightingale,
Or say to a goose, Begone!

‘Alack, poor souls,’ quoth Early-Heart,
‘Then yours be only geese?
Nor only so; but your sheep are sheep;
And mine have a golden fleece!’

Quoth Early-Heart, ‘And if mine be swans,
Right true you say, hereby.
So take your little and leave my much;
For the lad in luck am I!’

Waddle and quack, and bleat and baa,
They quacked and they baa’d, ’t is true.
But Early-Heart followed a white, white flock,
And the hills were far and blue.

BEAUTIFUL

I HAVE no word to tell you
The beauty of her face;
From her, a wedding garment
Would win a grace.

And as the glow of moonrise
Will make the east divine,
Doth Soul, the radiant dweller,
Her face outshine.

AFTER ALL

I WOULD not now give up one hurt,
In this far light of morning;
Each one a rose, a blood-red rose,
A rose for my adorning.

Yes, and the pallor of old grief,
Too lowly even for scorning,
Is warmed into a breathing rose,
A rose for my adorning.

VANITY, SAITH THE PREACHER

I LOVE my little gowns;
I love my little shoes,
All standing still below them,
Set quietly by twos.

All day I wear them careless,
But when I put them by
They look so dear and different,
And yet I don't know why.

My oldest one of all, —
Worn out; and then the best;
But that I have not worn enough
To love it, like the rest.

The dimity for Sunday,
The blue one and the wool,
Now that I see them hanging up,
Are somehow beautiful.

Of all the white, with ribbons
Gray-green, if I could choose;

40 THE SINGING LEAVES

The fichu that helps everything
Be gay; and then, my shoes.

My shoes that skip and saunter,
And one that will untie: —
They look so funny and so young,
I hate to put them by.

I wonder, — if some day . . .
All this will be the Past? —
Poor Hop-the-brook and Dance-with-me,
They cannot always last!

THE TOP OF THE MORNING

MY days are strung in amber
Till I am sad again:
My days are full of sunlight
Beyond all sun or rain.

My heart is full of tidings
From every wind that blows;
And I cannot say, 'Good-day to you,'
But everybody knows!

FORETHOUGHT

I DID not keep the Rose he brought,
After its day;
Although it lived a longer time
Than other roses may.

I let it go the way of all,
For this one fear:
Because it might persuade my heart
That he was growing dear.

But now my heart is well assured;
And I still sing;
And no one here would ever know
That I miss anything!

UNSAID

AH lad, if I could only say
The smiles are not for you!
But since your eyes are turned this
way,
What is there I can do?
It's one I see beyond, beyond,
My heart is leaning to.

I know, I know, the whole hour long
I have been dull and sad,
And answered not the word at all
I meant to answer, lad;
Because my wits were gone astray
With all the heart I had.

And now the latest ones are come,
And he is coming too;
And I would keep the starlight back,
But oh, it will shine through!
And since you never turn to see,
You take it all to you.

DANCE-TIME

IT'S I live in a very wise Town,
As all wise people know:
They read, they write, they read all day
As orchard-trees do grow.

Said I, — I was a young thing then,
And a foolish young thing, too, —
'I will not spend my little life thus;
There's much I'd rather do.

'For I would rather look at you
This way, with happy looks,
Than lose the stars from my two eyes
With poring over books.

'I'd rather far be red and white
For stupid folks to see
Than write nine books for little dull worms
To eat them, leisurely.

'And I would rather have it said
When all my days are through,

“O she was good to see and hear
And say Good-morning to!”

‘When learning makes you white and red
And fresh as west-winds blow,
I may spend sun and candle-light
To learn what they all know.

‘But O, the wise in this wise Town,
They have no longer prime.
And there are fewer wise men, now,
Than once upon a time!’

THE ENCHANTED SHEEP-FOLD

THE hills far-off were blue, blue,
The hills at hand were brown;
And all the herd-bells called to me
As I came by the down.

The briars turned to roses — roses
Ever we stayed to pull
A white little rose, and a red little rose,
And a lock of silver wool.

Nobody heeded, — none, none;
And when True Love came by,
They thought him nought but the shepherd-
boy.
Nobody knew but I!

The trees were feathered like birds, birds;
Birds were in every tree.
Yet nobody heeded, nobody heard,
Nobody knew, save we.

And he is fairer than all, — all.
How could a heart go wrong?
For his eyes I knew, and his knew mine,
Like an old, old song.

YES, LOVE IS BLIND

TRULY, Love is blind.
All my wish and will,
That he takes for me:
Sure Love cannot see,
That he thinks so, still!

Truly, Love is blind;
But he hears, instead.
He hath such fine ears,
Far away he hears
Little words unsaid.

Truly, Love is blind;
For the merest touch,
Hover of a breath,
Smiling underneath,
He will take for much.

Blind, and without fear!
Even so, I find
He would have me here
Always, very near.
Truly, Love is blind.

THE MORNING WAS SO BRIGHT

THE morning was so bright to see,
I thought that he would come,
Though he is far away from me
While I bide on at home.

The morning was so wide, so blue;
The tide ran in to greet: —
It could not be, I knew, I knew,
But O, the wind was sweet!

There was a ripple on the pond;
The road had one refrain;
And something called me, just beyond
The turn of every lane.

The trees were trying not to sing;
They beckoned on and on:
The day went by with promising,
And now the day is gone.

The after-glow, it fades away
With my own Star above; —
And all the day, and all the day,
I looked for my true love.

THE TWO

AND if they faltered in their speech,
They knew not; for their eyes
Grew like with gazing, each on
each,
Like deep of sea and skies.

AFTER-THOUGHT

BUT I was happy then,
How happy was I then!
The sorry saying you may hear
Upon the lips of men.

To know when you are happy,
You would not call it wise;
Yet, for the seeing happiness,
How tears will clear the eyes!

They laugh best who laugh last,
Says Pride that fears a fall.
But O, who will not laugh at first,
May never laugh at all!

NEAR AND FAR

NEAR and far, near and far,
All the lights were keeping
Quiet watch with lamp and star,
While the roads were sleeping.

And I saw, far and near:
Starlight overhead;
While a woman's shadow, here,
Made to-morrow's bread.

Near and far; and I forgot
Stars must needs be small:
Lamp and shadow, knowing not,
Did so fold them all.

FRIENDS ALL

LITTLE Kathleen, when I was ill,
Offered the mass for me;
And burned a holy candle, too
As white as wax could be.

Little Kathleen, I think of her, —
It may be once a year, —
When houses sweeten with the fir
And bells ring out good cheer!

Hejå! But it is good to live
And walk brown earth once more;
And good to hear your fingers knock
At some familiar door. —

And O, to see them all again,
To see them, — though they say,
'And did you take a journey, then?
And were you long away?'

*O, did you take a journey, then?
And were you long away?*

VANTAGE

THE wisest finding that I have
Is very young, no doubt.
Yet many a man must needs grow
old
Before he finds it out.

How happily it comes about —
And I was never told! —
That we must all be young awhile,
Before we can be old.

A SONG OF SOLOMON

KING Solomon was the wisest man
Of all that have been kings.
He built an House unto the Lord:
And he sang of creeping things.

Of creeping things, of things that fly,
Or swim within the seas;
Of the little weed along the wall;
And of the Cedar-trees.

And happier he, without mistake,
Than all men since alive.
God's House he built; and he did make
A thousand songs and five.

COUNSEL TO BEGGARS

O CAME you by the same road too,
The road that called to me?
And fellow-farers, will you learn
What shelter there may be?

There's daybreak there to fill your heart
Red wine for half the way;
And gold there is of sunset, then,
To last another day.

(And fill your pockets with the same
Altho' your need be small.
Take all the bounty while you may,
To have some wherewithal.)

And if you see the new moon,
I bid you tell the news,
And lend the slender silverness
For other poor to use.

And if your heart be sudden light,
And yet you know not why,

56 THE SINGING LEAVES

I counsel you to hold the joy;
Let pride of woe go by.

And if your feet be wearied out, .
And you would rest therefore,
Seek out some house; but look you leave
Your sandals at the door.

For you shall find — tho' sad to find
Where houses be so few —
Your too-much sorrow irks a friend,
If ever it irkèd you!

Take heart. And if the open air
No shelter seem to be,
Yet there you shall — and only there —
Have all that you can see.

THE TWA CHEERLESS

EH, is there nothing doing?
Then give your soul good heed;
And show yourself the miracles
That you would like to read,
As long as you're in need.

And then suppose I sing myself
— And if you will, give ear, —
The very song I never heard,
But I would like to hear:
And this, man, will be cheer!

THE WALK

WE left the house, for we were sad,
To talk of all the griefs we had;

And little did we talk at first,
Leaving to silence all the worst.

The rain it rained and star was none;
The wet made two lights out of one.

And broken paths of shining yet
Made on before us, through the wet.

The more we walked and still would walk,
The less did seem the need of talk.

The more we walked from light to light,
The wiser grew the troubled night.

The tacit lamps proved something clear
As often as one stayed to hear:

And better ways, and endless clews
Dawned with the lengthening avenues.

Till where the street-ends met the square,
We found a thousand tulips there,

Sleeping as flowers sleep o' nights,
Beneath a thousand city-lights.

And then the Bridge from shore to shore
Solved everything forevermore,

So clearly, you could leave the Why,
Contented, to some by-and-by.

And time, and grief, were worn away
Till there was nothing left, to say.

REFRAINS

I LOVE all the world to-day!

That is very young.

'So I sing, the while I may.'

All the songs are sung.

'God would never say me nay.'

Heed the foolish tongue!

'There's a singing in the tree,' —

All the songs are sung.

'Nightingales! Oh, could it be?'

Heed the foolish tongue!

'And the new moon smiles at me.'

Ah, the moon is young!

OUTSIDE THE MUSIC

NOW they come, and now they stop,
Now they all go in.
Now the coaches drive away;
And now it must begin.

All their faces looked the same,
Every time before.
If I heard it, I should know
More and more and more.

If I heard it, I would sing,
When I went away.
I would sing it till I grew
Beautiful, some day.

O, I hear a whiff of it;
There's another one; —
And the coaches driving up,
After it's begun!

THE FAIREST

THE fairest thing that men have made,
My lad, it is a Ship,
O, beautiful beyond the white
Wild bird she would outstrip!
So beautiful, so beautiful,
A heart must leap to bless,
And after her the wake of foam
Stay white with happiness.

And fairer than all things beside,
My maid, — a Violin;
Nay, aught that will give out again
The music hid within.
Or pipe or string or hollow shell,
It breaks enchanted sleep,
To win awhile the faëry heart
Of air that none may keep.

But all of you who may not go
To sail upon the sea, —
Who wait upon another's whim
For hope of melody, —

Oh, bless your hunger and your thirst,
And give your spirit wings
To speed beyond a narrow door
The heart that sails and sings!

THE CHILD AND THE ANGEL

O H, is it you at evening,
And near enough to speak?
And early in the morning,
Your breath upon my cheek?

And when the city noises
Turn into clouds that sing,
Is it your veil around me,
Of hush, and wondering?

And is it you, at sunset,
Who beckon me apart
Till I am something golden,
With petals in my heart?

Ah, Dearness, somewhere over!
A happy child is this
That with shut eyes uplifted,
Waits for you with a kiss.

READING FOR THE POOR

YOUNG Pity passed us in the street.
Her eyes were like a brook;
And golden leaf and shadow bird
Darkened and lit her look.

Her hair was like the meadow-marsh
That reaches to the sea;
And on her cheek a wild-rose glowed,
The timely rose for me!

Young Pity never knew the word
She gave to men in need,
All clear and simple, in her face,
For working ones to read.

THE BLIND ONE

O HIDE your eyes, my maiden,
And tell your heart to hush;
For love is very bright to see,
And louder than a thrush.
And all adream you wander
Alone in crowded ways,
Where eyes of all the fools and wise
Do follow, wide agaze!

Yet all in vain, my maiden,
To shadow eyes like these;
They shine behind your fingers
Like starlight through the trees.
So dream and shine among us,
Unwitting of the boon, —
How all the eyes, of fools and wise,
Are grateful to the Moon.

HOLIDAY

WHEN I am far from joy of this,
In yon thick world of men,
O, save me — save me, world of
blue! —

That I shall thirst for then.

And when the little strength is spent
And little hope burns low,
Blow softly on that tortured flame,
— Fresh air from long ago!

THE FOOL

O WHAT a Fool am I! — Again, again,
To give for asking; yet again to trust
The needy love in women and in men,
Until again my faith is turned to dust
By one more thrust.

How you must smile apart who make my hands
Ever to bleed where they were reached to bless;
— Wonder how any wit that understands
Should ever try too near, with gentle stress,
Your sullenness!

Laugh, stare, deny. Because I shall be true, —
The only triumph slain by no surprise:
True, true, to that forlornest truth in you.
The wan, beleaguered thing behind your eyes,
Starving on lies.

Build by my faith; I am a steadfast tool:
When I am dark, begone into the sun.
I cry, 'Ah Lord, how good to be a Fool: —
A lonely game indeed, but now all done;
— And I have won!'

DRUDGE

I WAITED long until the sky
Should give me of its blue
To weave and wear, and share, and weave
The very stars into.
The days they went, the years they went,
And left my hands instead
Another thing for wonderment,
— The mending, and the bread.

Ah me, and one must set a hand
To burnish up the task,
And hush and hush the old demand
A wakeful heart will ask.
But with a star's clear eye on me,
O, I can hear it said,
'What souls there be, that only see
The mending, and the bread!'

THE YOUNGEST DRYAD

WHAT were you seeking? For my
heart

Woke at your step and heard;
The farthest wakeful leaf of me,
And the hidden nest of the midmost tree,
Hushed with its hidden bird.
Ah, but the rune imprisoned me
Till you should speak one word.

Why did you think the spell that drew
Fell from the cedar there?
You questioned pine and sister pine,
Lingered near ash and wild-grape vine,
— Doubted the maidenhair;
Ever you missed these eyes of mine
Too like the twilight air.

The Sun may call the dew to him,
The waters call the deer;
But O, my roots bind every limb
To hold me hid, apart and dim
And silent, and so near; —
And every leaf of me abrim —
With that you shall not hear.

COME BUY!

THE flowers knew her through the
frost,
Their own true-lover.

Rose crowding rose, the color crossed;
The silver breath could hover
Near and far, poor lover!

They wondered at her through the pane,
And through December.
And then she went her way again,
— Eyes trying to remember.
Have your day, December!

PRINCE CHARLIE

O HAD you died upon the field
That was so grim to plough,
The tears had blinded every eye
That sharpens on you now.

For death had been a glorious gift,
With all you had to give,
And kinder than we stay-at-homes;
But ah, you had to live!

THE MEETING

GOOD-MORNING to you, then.'
(O stricken heart of her!
Silence, silence, breathe for me
A little breath of myrrh.)

'And so good-by again;
Good-by, if you must go.'
(Go after, little shade of me,
And tell her that I know.)

THE COBBLER

A LITTLE cloud in a golden veil
At setting of the sun:
And I a cobbler working — work-
ing;
Work is never done.

A little cloud in a golden veil;
And I am mending shoes,
Never a feathered sandal thing
Such as a cloud may use.

A little cloud in a golden veil,
Along the bright highway:
And but for her, to-morrow were
Another yesterday.

And this will stay, tho' she melt away
After the moon sets sail.
For no man's sky is always gray,
— Cloud in a golden veil.

MIRACLE

LOVE came by in bitter need.
Oh, but I was sad!
Love stood by in bitter need,
And I nothing had.

Empty were the hands I held
Silently to Love.
Empty, as my heart of words,
Stared the sky above.

Lo, Love took — and thankfully —
All my wish for true;
Then my hands gave back to me,
Full of kisses too.

OPEN HOUSE

MY home is not so great;
But open heart I keep.
The sorrows come to me,
That they may sleep.

The little bread I have
I share, and gladly pray
To-morrow may give more,
To give away.

Yes, in the dark sometimes
The childish fear will haunt:
How long, how long, before
I die of want?

But all the bread I have,
I share, and ever say,
To-morrow shall bring more
To give away.

O SLEEP, SLEEP, SLEEP!

DO not dream of me.
Nay, without mistake,
Even for love's sake
And all heedfully;
Do not dream of me.

All day long am I
Leal to all you ask:
Wish and care and task,
Every need come nigh; —
Still to serve and try.

But with my Good-night,
O unrippled sleep!
What is here, should keep
This bewildered light
From its skyward right?

Let me feel no need;
Not a love that clings.
Let me have my wings;
Love my wings indeed:
Give my wings godspeed!

Do not dream of me.
Waking, I'll be human; —
Call it child or woman.
Sleeping, I would be
Only Something Free.

THE CLOUD

THE islands called me far away,
The valleys called me home.
The rivers with a silver voice
Drew on my heart to come.

The paths reached tendrils to my hair
From every vine and tree.
There was no refuge anywhere
Until I came to thee.

There is a northern cloud I know,
Along a mountain crest.
And as she folds her wings of mist,
So I could make my rest.

There is no chain to bind her so
Unto that purple height;
And she will shine and wander, slow,
Slow, with a cloud's delight.

Would she begone? She melts away,
A heavenly joyous thing.

80 THE SINGING LEAVES

Yet day will find the mountain white,
White-folded with her wing.

As you may see, but half aware
If it be late or soon,
Soft breathing on the day-time air,
The fair forgotten Moon.

And though love cannot bind me, Love,
— Ah no! — yet I could stay
Maybe, with wings forever spread,
— Forever, and a day.

THE RAVENS

MY eyes are blind with dust;
My limbs are dull with pain:
But my body shall up and after me,
Again — again — again.

They hover and wheel above.
Where I creep on, they fly;
And with their call and vaunt of life,
They tempt my soul to die.

And the numbness of my heart,
The length I have to go,
The dimness of my starving sight,
They know, they know, they know!

But the little spark I hold
Shall light me farther on
After the gleam — like a far-off stream, —
Until that, too, is gone.

Mirage — mirage — mirage!
But I say, I will not die

82 THE SINGING LEAVES

For the hoarse Despairs that wait, that poise,
And I creep while they do fly.

No wonder they stoop so low;
And no wonder they should scoff
With Ah and Ah! — and beak and claw,
As they let me beat them off.

For there is no path to see.
But after the vanished flag
My soul has gone; and after me,
Body must strive and lag.

Up with you, — follow; come —
Whither my face is set.
They would have us dead: but I have said,
Not yet, — not yet, — not yet!

NEIGHBORS

WHO found for you the waters that
soothed your heart-break first?
‘Oh, who but these, my Sorrow, my
Hunger and my Thirst!’

‘Who made your eyes the wiser to hail the
farthest star?’

‘Who but my Dark I thanked not, — the Dark
where no lamps are!

‘And I come singing, Neighbor, to tell you,
where you grieve.

And though my song bled, bled afresh, — yet
would you not believe.’

THE MORNING SOUL

O LITTLE cripple, with the lovely eyes,
What have we done to thee? —
For all our wisdom, putting out thy
gleam,
Crying, 'Thou seest not, it is a dream!' —
Against thy cry, 'I see.'

O little cripple with the lovely eyes,
What have we now to show?
With vext perpetual ways past finding out,
Teaching thee well the hundred things of doubt,
Who saigest once, 'I know.'

O little cripple with the lovely eyes,
That music of the Sphere
We only sought to bind for thee secure
Some day, if it were true, for thee too sure
Rejoicing with, 'I hear!'

O little cripple with the lovely eyes,
Flower of the broken stalk,
Have pity on our need, for it is sore, —
Of thee, thee only, — thee to go before;
Rise up, rise up, and walk!

THE HILL-TOP

LOOK down upon thy grief.' — O heart of
mine,
That path alone climbed here!

'Look down upon thy fear.' — O heart of mine,
That cloud-shadow, my fear!

'Look down on thy desire.' — And could it
shine,
That sorry fallen ember?

'Ah, in the valley yonder, child of mine,
Wilt thou remember?'

THE DOVES

THE doves fly out, the doves fly in,
Brighter than cloud above,
From thee to me, and again to thee,
Out of my heart, O Love.

My heart is troubled and hushed with wings
From the deep, beneath, above;
And the hovering flight of more white things
Than Earth hath the gladness of.

After one call they follow, all: —
Thy call to me, O Love:
Lightning out of the blue, but mine
In the likeness of the Dove.

FOUND

O WHEN I saw your eyes,
So old it was, so new, the hushed surprise:

After a long, long search, it came to be,
Home folded me.

And looking up, I saw
The far, first stars like tapers to my awe,
In the dim hands of hid, benignant Powers,
At search long hours.

And did they hear us call,
That they have found us children after all?
And did you know, O Wonderful and Dear,
That I was here?

ALL HAIL

O BLESSED of the dark, we meet along
an unknown sky;
And here within the light of you, how
beautiful am I!

The other worlds are dim around, beneficent
with night.

But I — I turn my face to you, and have no
other sight.

So poising radiant, strong with joy, in desert
air divine,

One star doth to another call, and we belovèd
shine.

We shine transfigured, shine, to know beyond
all hope made wise,

The echo, echo of All Hail, from new-illumined
eyes.

Who know not what your glory is, nor why my
looks are bright,

I lean to you, I call to you, I shine with you, my
light.

THE ANOINTED

I WAS a little gleaner
Of all the days would yield,
When wonder overtook me
At work within the field.

The stars they gathered round me,
Holding their torches high.
They cried, 'Behold the chosen!'
And it was none but I.

They hailed me royal, kindred,
And made me understand
With gifts of light and darkness
They gave into my hand.

And here the wonder holds me
Though voices all are gone,
Here in the brimming silence,
With this to think upon.

The kiss upon my forehead
Forevermore is mine.
The sweetness fills my heart up;
The tears make all things shine.

TO THE EVENING STAR

YES, and you come, you come. Soft
piercing through
The luminous fair pallor of the west;
Budded in light and blooming manifest
As that first lily of the field may do;
Unshaken by the winds, that all for you
Have made the pathway ready, loveliest,
You come, you look upon us, shining Guest
Of glories that the world is blind unto!

All hail from us who work no more, but wait:
From the worn furrows darkened after toil,
And from the Sea; and from all eyes that
are.

Hallow our upward looks, and consecrate
These thankful offered saviors of the soil
With the one lovingkindness of a Star.

TO HER BOOK

I KISS you once for luck,
That you may feel no care.
I kiss you thrice for love
That you must spend and share.
Go now, and wheresoe'er
A heart shall take you in,
It is your very kin:
Make music there.

THE BOOK OF THE LITTLE PAST

*'I watched, . . . even as it were a Sparrow that sitteth
upon the house-top'*

(Published in 1908)

MAKING A HOUSE

FIRST of all, I draw the Smoke
Trailing up the sky;
Then the Chimney, underneath;
And Birds all flying by;
Then the House; and every Window,
Watching, like an Eye.

Everybody else begins
With the House. But I
Love the Smoke the best of all;
And you don't know why! . . .
Here it goes, — like little feathers,
Sailing up the sky!

THE BUSY CHILD

I HAVE so many things to do,
I don't know when I shall be through.

To-day I had to watch the rain
Come sliding down the window-pane.

And I was humming, all the time,
Around my head, a kind of rhyme,

And blowing softly on the glass,
To see the dimness come and pass.

I made a picture, with my breath
Rubbed out to show the underneath.

I built a city on the floor;
And then I went and was a War. —

And I escaped, from square to square
That's greener on the carpet, there,

Until at last, I came to Us:
But it was very dangerous. —

Because if I had stepped Outside,
I made believe I should have died!

.

And now I have the boat to mend;
And all our supper to pretend.

I am so Busy, all the day,
I haven't any time to play.

SUNSET

THOSE islands far away are mine,
Beyond the cloudy strip;
And something beautiful, besides: —
I think it is a Ship.

WIND

I LET them call it just *The Wind*,
And tell me not to grieve.
But I know all it left behind,
And more than they believe.

I know; about the far-off lands,
Where people never sleep;
They hide their faces in their hands,
And rock, and weep, and weep.

And I too little, all alone,
To go and find them yet;—
But Oh, I hear!— When I am grown,
I never will forget.

LATE

MY Father brought somebody up,
To show us all, asleep.
They came as softly up the stairs
As you could creep.

They whispered in the doorway there,
And looked at us awhile.
I had my eyes shut up; but I
Could feel him smile.

I shut my eyes up close, and lay
As still as I could keep;
Because I knew he wanted us
To be asleep.

CAKES AND ALE

I'M always glad when Andrew comes.
If only I am there,
He stays awhile, and talks to me,
As if he did not care.

He took me to some Music once,
When it was all for me.
And Oh, I had a splendid time!
And he said, So did He.

It lasts as if the Music still
Went round and round the sky. —
He said he had a good time, too;
And I said, So did I!

THE JOURNEY

I NEVER saw the hills so far
And blue, the way the pictures are;

And flowers, flowers growing thick,
But not a one for me to pick!

The land was running from the train,
All blurry through the window-pane.

And then it all looked flat and still,
When up there jumped a little hill!

I saw the windows and the spires,
And sparrows sitting on the wires;

And fences, running up and down;
And then we cut straight through a town.

I saw a Valley, like a cup;
And ponds that twinkled, and dried up.

I counted meadows, that were burnt;
And there were trees, — and then there
weren't!

We crossed the bridges with a roar,
Then hummed, the way we went before.

And tunnels made it dark and light
Like open-work of day and night.

Until I saw the chimneys rise,
And lights and lights and lights, like eyes.

And when they took me through the door,
I heard It all begin to roar. —

I thought — as far as I could see —
That everybody wanted Me!

PIGEONS OUT WALKING

THEY never seem to hurry, — no,
Even for the crowd.
They dip, and coo, and move as
slow,
All so soft and proud!
You can see the wavy specks
Of bubble-color on their necks;
— Little, little Cloud.

Cloud that goes, the very way
All the Bubbles do:
Blue and green, and green and gray,
Gold and rosy, too.
And they talk as Bubbles could
If they only ever would
Talk and call and coo!

— Till you try to catch one so,
Just to make it stay
While the colors turn. But Oh,
Then they fly away! —
All at once, two, three, four, five —
Like a snowstorm all alive, —
Gray and white, and gray!

CONCERNING LOVE

I WISH she would not ask me if I love the
Kitten more than her.
Of Course I love her. But I love the Kitten,
too; and It has Fur.

CURLS

IT happens that way in the world
With everything you see.
Some people have their hair all curl'd,
Some straight as straight can be.
It is a Mystery.

Yes, some have hair that waves and clings,
And does all kinds of curly things; —
And some not ever, till they Die.
And nobody knows Why. . . .
And some, — already born with Curls,
Some of them are not even Girls!

.

I always think, — of Curly Hair,
It looks as if the Curls came there
The way I hum around a song
More things than really do belong.
The happier I feel, the more
I sing, I never heard before!
I curl more music round the Air,
The way it looks with Curly Hair.

[*Envoi*]

But you may sing all day, you know;
You cannot really make it grow.
And you may know it is Not Fair;
But that won't give you Curly Hair.

I WAS LOST

*[Oh, the Day that I was Lost, I never shall forget:
I wake up in the night sometimes, and think It's
Happening Yet.]*

SHE let me go, a minute.
She said she would take care;
But she let me go, a minute:
And then — She wasn't there.

Everything grew awful
That was good before.
And the Faces didn't look
Like people any more.

It made you feel like Wrinkles
All over you; and Cold.
It made you feel two hundred
And eighty-nine years old.

It was like being Homesick,
And Hurt; when no one Cares.
It was exactly like a Wreck;
And people smiled like Bears.

I thought that my own Mother
Had just — Forgotten me!
I thought that God had lost me,
Like a Penny in the Sea.

.

The Noise all seemed to grow and grow
And roar until it drowned me. —
And I could only say, — '*I'm Lost.*' . . .
And then, at last, — they Found me,
— They Found me!

THE POLITE VISITOR

I FEEL polite, outside the door;
But when it should begin,
I can't remember Not to ask
If just their Cat is in.

And if the Sun should sprinkle through
Along the floor that way,
I can't remember what I do
If I am Urged to Stay.

And when I've shaken hands all round,
— No matter how I try,
I can't remember Not to go
And Kiss their Dog good-by,
— Good-by,
— Good-by!

*Yes, thank you, please. — They're Very Well;
— I think I'd better go.*

*Yes, thank you, please. I'm always late;
My Mother told me so.*

THE POLITE VISITOR III

*Yes, thank you! — If I Have to Bring
A message, — yes, I'll come;
— And if your Bird will only Sing;
— And when your Cat is home.*

THE MYSTIC

PEOPLE say to me,
‘A penny for your thought.’ —
And I can’t remember thinking;
And I should think I ought.
I wasn’t sleeping, either:
I know that, because
I saw things out of both my eyes.
I wonder where I was.

Now I’m back, I see them
Sitting all around;
And the noise, together,
Makes a purring sound.
But I know Something More
Than just awhile ago.
I know Something More! —
I wonder what I know.

MARKET

I WENT to Market yesterday,
And it is like a Fair
Of everything you'd like to see;
But nothing live is there:
— The Pigeons, hanging up to eat;
And Rabbits, by their little feet! —
And no one seemed to care.

And there were Fishes out in rows,
Bright ones of every kind;
Some were pink, and silver too;
But all of them were blind.
Yes, everything you'd like to touch. —
It would not make you happy much,
But no one seemed to mind.

And loveliest of all, a Deer! —
Only its eyes were blurred;
And hanging by it, very near,
A beautiful great Bird.
So I could smooth his feathers through,
And kiss them, very softly, too:
But Oh, he never stirred!

LITTLE SIDE-STREETS

WHY are some streets so different?
The kittens all are long and thin;
I think they have more flowers there,
But broken things to grow them in.

Why do they like the house so high,
With such a little of the ground?
And do you think they ever see
The Moon before it's old and round?

Why won't I like to play there, too?
With all the funny things to eat,
And all the carts with little bells,
And dancing-music in the street?

And if I can't, then why do they
Stay out, the whole of evening? —
Why do they always seem to have
Just Not-Enough of everything?

Why don't you come? — Why can't I go?
It isn't Fair! — What makes it so? —
If they don't like it? Don't you know?
Why do you always never know?

CHESTNUT STANDS

I WONDER why you feel, somehow,
It's wrong to leave a Chestnut stand,
With all so much of what you want
In both your pockets and your hand.
I always have to turn around; —
It sounds so hurt — I don't see why —
That little high-up crying sound
I don't remember by and by.

There is not anything so good
As Chestnuts (when they're hot) can be.
It must be fun to count them out,
With One for You and One for Me;
And yet it stays so doleful there,
— For all the People going by, —
And breathing frosty on the air,
Like something trying not to cry.

— It Isn't something I was Told!
I know it's small and scared and thin. —
It's like when both your hands are cold,
And Pockets you can't put them in!

116 THE LITTLE PAST

— Like something happened long ago;
— Like feeling Homesick, — yes, and Shy;
Like being Sorry, — when you know
You won't remember, by and by.

THE PLAY'S THE THING

I NEVER dared to look away
While they were tuning so,
For fear the Curtain might go up,
— And I not see it go! —
Then all at once, it all went Dark; —
To make you hold your breath and hark,
— Oh, hold your breath and hark!

Excepting where the Curtain was,
It stayed as black as night;
And that kept still one minute more,
All edged across with light: —
Then Up — and Up —
And Oh, so soon,
It was like all Inside the Moon,
— Yes, sitting in the Moon!

And Oh, how Beautiful they were! —
And could we see them near? —
And Oh, how brave at everything!
But it was somehow queer
To see that smiling way they had:

118 THE LITTLE PAST

They smiled so much, but not all glad;
— No, not so always glad.

I wish we couldn't go away;
I wish it would begin
All over, now, and never end;
I wish we were Locked In!
Oh, can't we see it all again?
To-morrow! — Sunday! Monday? When?
— Ah, when, when?

WINDOWS

ONCE, and in the daytime too, I made
myself afraid,
Playing Eyelids-Up-and-Down, with the
window-shade;
Till the Houses seemed to watch People going
by;
And they kept me looking, too, — wondering
where and why.

*If I were that Other Boy, — if I were those Men,
Going by with things to sell, — who would I be,
then?*

Windows with their eyebrows high; windows like
a frown,
Thinking it all over, so, with the curtains down;
Tall ones that are somehow sad, narrow ones that
blink, —
All the Windows you can see make you think,
and think.

*If I were that Old Man, and I looked up at me
Watching from the window here, Oh, then how
would it be?*

120 THE LITTLE PAST

Sometimes they are golden, with shining in their
eyes. —

Every time the sun sets, it happens like sur-
prise, —

And so bright, I almost forget the dream I made;
But I keep it, for the days I want to make my-
self afraid.

*If I were that Boy who limps, — now it's dark
and snowing,*

*And if I were going home, — Oh, where would
I be going? °*

THE MASTERPIECE

MY Mother cut it out for me,
And started it, so I could see;
And then she turned some edges in,
And let me take it to begin.
I made it. But I did not know
How very long it takes to sew.
I took a long time for that stitch;
And now it's there, I don't know which
Is better. But not one is small,
And they are not alike at all.
That side was very hard to fix.
And then, the needle always pricks:
But you must hold it, and take care, —
Because the point is always there;
And knots keep coming by and by;
And then, no matter how you try,
The thread comes out of its old eye!

.

But some way, now I have it done, —
I think it is a Pretty One.

ODE ON THE DOG

I

MY Pitch-dark Angel with a Rosy Tongue,
My Own — my Own,
Why can't the grown-up Things we live
among
Let us alone?
Why do they have to talk the livelong day
About such silly things?
But if they must, — why can't they, anyway,
Have either Tails or Wings?

II

Of Course I cannot love them as they are,
As much as You.
Why aren't they ever really Beautiful,
— They too? —
With curly coats, like wool;
And floppy ears to pull;
Yes, and a wide pink mouth, with such a Smile!
Yes, and a Tail that beats time all the while;
Beautiful, Beautiful! —
And golden stars, for eyes,
Behind the darkest trees
(Till your hair's parted)!

ODE ON THE DOG 123

Why can't they have such darling ways as
these? —

Why can't they be so lovely when they
sneeze? —

Why can't they ever be so tender-hearted,
Or even look so wise
As You? —

My Wonderful (even if you Won't say *Mew*),
My True Prince in Disguise!

Why can't they be
As funny, when they try to sing a song?
And when, for everything that I can do,
They Won't Agree, —

Why can't they think they're always in the
wrong?
— Like You!

III

Why you, — O Precious Thing,
You are swift (almost) as any Sparrow. —
Over the tall grass how you arch and spring,
Yes, like a bow and arrow! —
Oh, and how good to see you, when it snows,
Plough a long, lovely pathway with your nose!
(No one grown-up could do it,
I suppose.)

IV

My dearest Blessing and my Very Own,
Even when I am grown,
Never do you forsake me!

If you don't go to heaven when you die,
— Neither will I:

Nothing can ever make me!

I won't go,

For all that they can do.

No; on the steps Outside, and down, below,
Forever and ever and ever, I'll stay too!

— With You.

THE SORROWS

IF This is all it will be like,
I wish to Die; — I don't care how —
While I am very, very young;
As young as almost Now.

They never felt what Sorrow was;
Or never learned their Golden Rule;
They say, *These are your happiest days*,
— With School, — School, — School!

When Saturday's all out of breath
With all the week before in sight; —
And Monday coming after you
Spoils every Sunday night!

And Nothing done but yesterdays;
And Nothing coming but to-morrows!
Don't cheer me up. Please let me be.
— I have the Sorrows.

SECRETS

I HAVE a secret to myself,
That no one else can see.
I hum it over to myself,
And no one hears but me.
— Something You don't know!
I knew long ago. —
And the more I never tell you it,
The more it gets to be.

It makes me feel as purry
As the Kitten on your knee.
It makes me feel as round and warm
As the Sparrow on that tree;
It makes me puff my feathers out
The way he puffs out his. —
And if you think I haven't one,
I'll tell you what it is,
— Maybe!

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

I KNOW you're in the house;
I know you are in there;
I feel the green and breathing
All around the air.

I know you're safe and warm;

I know you're very near.

Oh, darling Tree,

Do you hear?

I promised not to look
(The way I did before),
But I can hear you purring —
Purring, through the door:
A green, soft, purring;

Just as if you knew:

Everybody here

Loves you.

Don't feel lonely,
Now you are in-doors. —
Wait for all the shining things
To-morrow, — all yours!

Then you won't know what to think! —
All over Candle-light.

— *Oh, darling Tree,*
Good-night.

And I love you, I love you;
And everybody, too.
And so does the market-man
That brought us you!
And if you haven't Anything
For me, this year,

— *I love you. Good-night!*
Do you hear?

CANDLE-LIGHT

WHEN I've wished on my first star,
While the rest begin,
And the grass is waking up,
Oh, She calls us in! —
Then She calls us in.

But I wouldn't go, unless
I were sure there'd be
Something more like that, indoors,
Something more to see, —
Beautiful to see.

So She lights the candle then,
Where the shadows are,
And it stands, and holds its breath —
Then it makes a Star, —
Then it makes a Star!

I curl up for my good-night,
Dark, where I can see.
And I watch the Candle-light
Till It looks at me,
Oh, It looks at me!

COW-BELLS

I'VE followed till the Sun was down,
As low as to the very brink;
And still the pathway kept along,
Around the world, I think.

I've tried to find it, everywhere
A bell would clink, and clink, and call;
But someway I can never find
That Farthest One of all.

I've been in all the tallest weeds, —
And thistles (with the loudest bees);
And once, across the stepping-stones
And through the cedar-trees.

And now you hear it hushing up,
And then you hear it clink and clink;
And if you found it, it would lead
Around the world, I think!

It sounds so small, and gold, and far —
Far-off, beyond the lily-pool; —
And so, as if there must be there
— Oh, something Wonderful!

THUNDER-STORMS

EXCEPTING when they're very loud,
And then, when they're almost too
bright,

I love to see a Thunder-Storm,
Excepting when it's in the night.

It's harder to remember, then:

It's Very Wicked not to trust

A Thunder-Storm. Because it's Sure

To know! — And then, besides, you Must.

For it will light your Heart up. — Yes;

The Deepest Darkness ever Made

Could Never Hide the Guilty One

... Who feels At All Afraid.

The thunder is the best of all,—

Except the wading for the Birds;

And then, the Shining in the wet;

— Oh, and the Rainbow, afterwards!

CHURCH-TIME

IT feels Forever without End,
The time I have to stay.
It's even harder to keep still
Than pray and pray and pray.

The reading happens all the time;
The praying rolls along;
And something makes them always sing
A long, long song.

So when I've nearly gone to sleep,
I make my Penny walk. —
I walk it up and down, to hear
The talk and talk and talk.

And if I lose it on the floor
Before they pass the Plate,
Why then there's nothing more to do
But wait — wait — wait. —

Till, when you'd have to go to sleep
Or else you'd have to die,
They let you Out, — and straight into
The Sky!

*With nests all hiding up the Trees,
And Roads to make you Run: —
And everything like Squirrels! —
In the Sun — the Sun!*

ANGELS

THEY are more shy than Snow.
You may look up and try to see one
there,
Just when you feel It breathing on your hair;
But then It has to go. —
Somehow, I know.

They want you to believe
How bright they are, and never try to see
Whether they keep their word. For that would
be
As if they could deceive.
That makes them grieve.

So, if you want Yours near,
And hide your eyes and keep quite still; and say,
'*Oh, I have Wanted you all day — all day;
Shine at me, Angel, dear!*'
It will be Here.

THE BEGGAR-MAN

HE only looked like a Beggar-man,
As ragged, just, as any.
But he might have been an Angel,
too.

So I gave him my penny.

I waited, till I thought I saw
Him shining through. And when he
Held out his hand, I watched for what
Would happen to my penny.

He might have been an Angel, too!
But I know he wasn't any.
For he frowned at me, like that, you see,
When it wasn't but One penny.

And now that's gone; and I don't care.
I'd rather not have any,
Than keep it, if an Angel came
And asked me for my penny.

THE GREEN SINGING-BOOK

I DON'T know how to read the words,
Nor how the black things go.
But if you stand it up, and sing,
You never have to know.

The music sounds alike each time
When grown-up people play;
But every time I sing, myself,
It sounds a different way.

And when I've sung the book all through,
And every page, around,
I stand it upside down and sing,
To see how that will sound.

I sing how all the things outside
The window look to me;
The shiny wrinkles in the road,
And then, about my Tree;

I sing about the City, too,
The noises and the wheels;
And Windows blinking in the sun; —
I sing the way it feels.

And if a Sparrow flies across,
I put him in the Song. —
I sing whatever happens in,
To make it last for long.

I sing about the things I think
Of almost everything.
Sometimes I don't know what to
Think
— Till I begin to Sing.

WING-SPROUTS

IT happens when the birds go by
And leave you far behind;
And you flutter, till you ache
All around your mind. —
Like a Flag,
Like a Flag
Flapping at the wind!

It happens when you catch the hills
As blue as yesterday;
You hold your heart in both your hands,
Or it would fly away.
Yes, it would!
Yes, it would!
Away — away — away!

It makes your heart into a Bird
That darts, and leaps, and sings.
— Oh, feel my pinafore, high up! —
Oh, do you think it's Wings?
Do you think —
Do you think —
Oh, couldn't it be Wings?

EARLY

I LIKE to lie and wait, to see
My Mother braid her hair.
It is as long as it can be,
And yet she doesn't care.
I love my Mother's hair.

And then the way her fingers go;
They look so quick and white, —
In and out, and to and fro,
And braiding in the light;
And it is always right.

So then she winds it, shiny brown,
Around her head into a crown,
Just like the day before.
And then she looks, and pats it down,
And looks, a minute more. —
While I stay here, all still and cool.
Oh, isn't Morning beautiful?

THE WIND'S EAST

THE Wind's east, — Oh, Oh!
Only a little while ago,
To-day was just like yesterday.

But now — now, only Now
The world's all turned some silver way; —
I know how,
I know how!

The Wind's east,
The Wind's east! —
Salt, salt Wind that I love so.
All the things in the garden blow
Wavy gray; — and the Trees all know, —
Trees that never, never can go,
Must know how it would feel to be
There, where the Ships sail to and fro,
Ships on the blue, blue Sea!
And the homesick ones by the bridge up here
Are tugging to get their anchors clear,
And they reach up high, to see.

They catch their breath when they feel the air,
And the rigging stirs, and the lanterns stare;

THE WIND'S EAST 141

For they know the tide is high out there,
The gulls go skirling by, out there, —

The gulls and the Wind go free.

And they tug, and they pull, and they wonder so
When will the Captain let them go? —

Oh, Oh, — to Sea,

To Sea!

AFTER-WORD

AND shall we light the candle now?
And leave, since there is so much more,
Our cupful, and the share of bread,
Here by the open door?

For some one might be wanting it,
If there should chance to come this way,
A very poor Man; or a Bird; —
Or maybe, God, some day.

THE SINGING MAN
A BOOK OF SONGS AND SHADOWS

(Published in 1911)

THE SINGING MAN
AN ODE OF THE PORTION OF LABOR

'The profit of the Earth is for all.'

— ECCLESIASTES

I

HE sang above the vineyards of the world.
And after him the vines with woven
hands

Clambered and clung, and everywhere unfurled
Triumphing green above the barren lands ;
Till high as gardens grow, he climbed, he stood,
Sun-crowned with life and strength, and sing-
ing toil,
And looked upon his work ; and it was good :
The corn, the wine, the oil.

He sang above the noon. The topmost cleft
That grudged him footing on the mountain
scars

He planted and despaired not ; till he left
His vines soft breathing to the host of stars.
He wrought, he tilled ; and even as he sang,
The creatures of his planting laughed to scorn
The ancient threat of deserts where there sprang
The wine, the oil, the corn !

146 THE SINGING MAN

He sang not for abundance. — Over-lords
 Took of his tilth. Yet was there still to reap,
 The portion of his labor; dear rewards
 Of sunlit day, and bread, and human sleep.
 He sang for strength; for glory of the light.

He dreamed above the furrows, 'They are
 mine !'

When all he wrought stood fair before his sight
 With corn, and oil, and wine.

*Truly, the light is sweet
 Yea, and a pleasant thing
 It is to see the Sun.
 And that a man should eat
 His bread that he hath won ; —
 (So is it sung and said),
 That he should take and keep,
 After his laboring,
 The portion of his labor in his bread,
 His bread that he hath won ;
 Yea, and in quiet sleep,
 When all is done.*

He sang; above the burden and the heat,
 Above all seasons with their fitful grace;
 Above the chance and change that led his feet
 To this last ambush of the Market-place.

'Enough for him,' they said — and still they
say —

'A crust, with air to breathe, and sun to
shine ;

He asks no more !' — Before they took away
The corn, the oil, the wine.

He sang. No more he sings now, anywhere.

Light was enough, before he was undone.

They knew it well, who took away the air,

— Who took away the sun ;

Who took, to serve their soul-devouring greed,

Himself, his breath, his bread — the goad of
toil ; —

Who have and hold, before the eyes of Need,

The corn, the wine, — the oil !

Truly, one thing is sweet

Of things beneath the Sun ;

This, that a man should earn his bread and eat,

Rejoicing in his work which he hath done.

What shall be sung or said

Of desolate deceit,

When others take his bread ;

His and his children's bread ? —

And the laborer hath none.

148 THE SINGING MAN

This, for his portion now, of all that he hath done.

He earns ; and others eat.

He starves ; — they sit at meat

Who have taken away the Sun.

II

Seek him now, that singing Man.

Look for him,

Look for him

In the mills,

In the mines ;

Where the very daylight pines, —

He, who once did walk the hills !

You shall find him, if you scan

Shapes all unbefitting Man,

Bodies warped, and faces dim.

In the mines ; in the mills

Where the ceaseless thunder fills

Spaces of the human brain

Till all thought is turned to pain.

Where the skirl of wheel on wheel,

Grinding him who is their tool,

Makes the shattered senses reel

To the numbness of the fool.

Perisht thought, and halting tongue —

(Once it spoke ; — once it sung !)
 Live to hunger, dead to song.
 Only heart-beats loud with wrong
 Hammer on, — *How long ?*
 . . . *How long ? — How long ?*

Search for him ;
 Search for him ;
 Where the crazy atoms swim
 Up the fiery furnace-blast.
 You shall find him, at the last, —
 He whose forehead braved the sun, —
 Wreckt and tortured and undone.
 Where no breath across the heat
 Whispers him that life was sweet ;
 But the sparkles mock and flare,
 Scattering up the crooked air.
 (Blackened with that bitter mirk, —
 Would God know His handiwork ?)

Thought is not for such as he ;
 Naught but strength, and misery ;
 Since, for just the bite and sup,
 Life must needs be swallowed up.
 Only, reeling up the sky,
 Hurtling flames that hurry by,

150 THE SINGING MAN

Gasp and flare, with *Why*—*Why*,
 . . . *Why?* . . .

Why the human mind of him
 Shrinks, and falters and is dim
 When he tries to make it out :
 What the torture is about. —
 Why he breathes, a fugitive
 Whom the World forbids to live.
 Why he earned for his abode,
 Habitation of the toad !
 Why his fevered day by day
 Will not serve to drive away
 Horror that must always haunt : —
 . . . *Want* . . . *Want !*
 Nightmare shot with waking pangs ; —
 Tightening coil, and certain fangs,
 Close and closer, always nigh . . .
 . . . *Why?* . . . *Why?*

Why he labors under ban
 'That denies him for a man.
 Why his utmost drop of blood
 Buys for him no human good ;
 Why his utmost urge of strength
 Only lets Them starve at length ; —

Will not let him starve alone;
He must watch, and see his own
Fade and fail, and starve, and die.

. . . *Why?* . . . *Why?*
.

Heart-beats, in a hammering song,
Heavy as an ox may plod,
Goaded — goaded — faint with wrong,
Cry unto some ghost of God
. . . *How long?* . . . *How long?*
. *How long?*

III

Seek him yet. Search for him!
You shall find him, spent and grim;
In the prisons, where we pen
These unsightly shards of men.
Sheltered fast;
Housed at length;
Clothed and fed, no matter how! —
Where the householders, aghast,
Measure in his broken strength
Nought but power for evil, now.
Beast-of-burden drudgeries

Could not earn him what was his :
 He who heard the world applaud
 Glories seized by force and fraud,
 He must break, — he must take ! —
 Both for hate and hunger's sake.
 He must seize by fraud and force ;
 He must strike, without remorse !
 Seize he might ; but never keep.
 Strike, his once ! — Behold him here.
 (Human life we buy so cheap,
 Who should know we held it dear ?)

No denial, — no defence
 From a brain bereft of sense,
 Any more than penitence.
 But the heart-beats now, that plod
 Goaded — goaded — dumb with wrong,
 Ask not even a ghost of God
 *How long ?*

*When the Sea gives up its dead,
 Prison caverns, yield instead
 This, rejected and despised ;
 This, the Soiled and Sacrificed !
 Without form or comeliness ;
 Shamed for us that did transgress ;*

*Bruised, for our iniquities,
 With the stripes that are all his !
 Face that wreckage, you who can.
 It was once the Singing Man.*

IV

Must it be ? — Must we then
 Render back to God again
 This His broken work, this thing,
 For His man that once did sing ?
 Will not all our wonders do ?
 Gifts we stored the ages through,
 (Trusting that He had forgot) —
 Gifts the Lord required not ?

Would the all-but-human serve !
 Monsters made of stone and nerve ;
 Towers to threaten and defy
 Curse or blessing of the sky ;
 Shafts that blot the stars with smoke ;
 Lightnings harnessed under yoke ;
 Sea-things, air-things, wrought with steel,
 That may smite, and fly, and feel !
 Oceans calling each to each ;
 Hostile hearts, with kindred speech.

154 THE SINGING MAN

Every work that Titans can ;
Every marvel : save a man,
Who might rule without a sword. —
Is a man more precious, Lord ?

Can it be ? — Must we then
Render back to Thee again
Million, million wasted men ?
Men, of flickering human breath,
Only made for life and death ?

Ah, but see the sovereign Few,
Highly favored, that remain !
These, the glorious residue,
Of the cherished race of Cain.
These, the magnates of the age,
High above the human wage,
Who have numbered and possesst
All the portion of the rest !

What are all despairs and shames,
What the mean, forgotten names
Of the thousand more or less,
For one surfeit of success ?

For those dullest lives we spent,
Take these Few magnificent !

For that host of blotted ones,
 Take these glittering central suns.
 Few ;— but how their lustre thrives
 On the million broken lives !
 Splendid, over dark and doubt,
 For a million souls gone out !
 These, the holders of our hoard, —
 Wilt thou not accept them, Lord ?

V

Oh, in the wakening thunders of the heart,
 — The small lost Eden, troubled through the
 night,
 Sounds there not now, — forboded and apart,
 Some voice and sword of light ?
 Some voice and portent of a dawn to break ? —
 Searching like God, the ruinous human shard
 Of that lost Brother-man Himself did make,
 And Man himself hath marred ?

It sounds !— And may the anguish of that
 birth
 Seize on the world ; and may all shelters fail,
 Till we behold new Heaven and new Earth
 Through the rent Temple-vail !

156 THE SINGING MAN

When the high-tides that threaten near and far
To sweep away our guilt before the sky, —
Flooding the waste of this dishonored Star,
Cleanse, and o'erwhelm, and cry !—

Cry, from the deep of world-accusing waves,
With longing more than all since Light
began,
Above the nations, — underneath the graves, —
' Give back the Singing Man !'

THE TREES

I

NOW, in the thousandth year,
When April's near,
Now comes it that the great ones of
the earth

Take all their mirth

Away with them, far off, to orchard-places, —

Nor they nor Solomon arrayed like these, —

To sun themselves at ease ;

To breathe of wind-swept spaces ;

To see some miracle of leafy graces ; —

To catch the out-flowing rapture of the trees.

Considering the lilies.

— Yes. And when

Shall they consider Men ?

(O showering May-clad tree,

Bear yet awhile with me.)

II

For now at last, they have beheld the trees.

Lo, even these ! —

The men of sounding laughter and low fears ;

The women of light laughter, and no tears ;

The great ones of the town.

And those, of most renown,

That once sold doves, — now grown so penny-
wise

To bargain with forlorn merchandise, —

They buy and sell, they buy and sell again,

The life-long toil of men.

Worn with their market strife to dispossess

The blind, — the fatherless,

They too go forth, to breathe of budding trees,

And woods with beckoning wonders new un-
furled.

Yes, even these :

The money-changers and the Pharisees ;

The rulers of the darkness of this world.

*(O choiring Summer tree,
Bear yet awhile with me.)*

III

For now, behold their heart's desire is thrall
To simpleness. — O new delight, unguessed,
In very rest !
And precious beyond all,
A garden-place, a garden with a wall!
To the green earth ! All bountiful to bless
Hearts sickening with excess.
To the green earth, whose blithe replenishments
Shall fresh the jaded sense !
To the green earth, the dust-corrupted soul
Returns to be made whole.
For now it comes indeed,
They will go forth, all they, to see a reed
So shaken by the wind.
Men are no longer blind
To aught, save human kind.

*(O mellowing August tree,
Bear yet awhile with me.)*

IV

The wonder this. For some there are no trees ;
Or in the trees no beauty and no mirth : —

Those dullest millions, pent
 In life-long banishment
 From all the gifts and creatures of the earth,
 Shut in the inner darkness of the town;
 Those blighted things you see,
 But the Sun sees not, at its going down: —
 Warped outcasts of some human forestry;
 Blind victims of the blind,
 Wreckt ones and dark of mind,
 With the poor fruit, after their piteous kind.
 And if you take some Old One to the fields,
 To see what Nature yields
 With fullest hands to men already free,
 It well may be,
 As on some indecipherable book
 The Guest will look,
 With eyes too old, — too old, too dim to
 see;
 Too old, too old to learn;
 Or to discern —
 Before it slips away,
 The joy of such a late half-holiday!
 Proffer those starved eyes your belated cup:
 They look not up.
 Too late, too late for any sky to do
 Brief kindness with its blue.

And what behold they, then?
In the shamed moment, when
Old eyes bow down again?

*Down in the night and blackness of the heart,
The drowned things start.
And he recks nothing of the meadow air,
Because of what is There.
Lost things of hope and sorrow without tongue:
The human lilies, sprung
Out of the ooze, and trodden,
Even as they breathed and clung!
Lost lilies, bruised and sodden;
Lost faces, gleaming there,
Where misery blasphemes the sacred young!
Mute outcry, most, of those
Small suffering hands defrauded of their rose;
Faces the daylight shuns;
Ruinous faces of the little ones,—
Pale witness, unaware.
Starved lips, and withering blood—
O broken in the bud!—
Blank eyes, and blighted hair.*

*(O golden, golden tree!
Bear yet awhile with me.)*

So is it, haply, when
Dull eyes look up, and then
Dull eyes look down again.
Waste no vain holiday on such as these;
For them there is no joy in blossomed trees.

V

For them there is no joy in blossomed trees.
And with what eye-shut ease
We leave them, at the last, for company,
The Tree,
Whose two stark boughs no springtime yet unfurled,
Ever, since time began;
Nor bloom so strange to see! —
Behold, the Man,
With His two arms outstretched to fold the
world.



O, do you remember? — How it came to be?
 Far, golden windows gazing from the shore;
 Golden ebb of daylight; heart could hold no more:
 Belovèd and Belovèd, and the sea.

Westward the sun, — low, slow and golden;
 Eastward the moon climbed, honey-pale.
 O do you remember? while our eyes were holden,
 Close, close upon us, — the Golden Sail?
 Wind-swift she came, — thing of living flame,
 Sea-breathing Glory, to make the heart afraid!
 The ripples, fold on fold
 Of coiling gold,
 Trailing a thousand ways
 Her golden maze,
 Rocked in a golden tumult, every one,
 The gondolas, the ships . . .
 Westward she made
 A portent from the sky, — gone by, gone by,
 To golden, far eclipse; . . .
 Into the Sun.

Behold, a mystery
 That shook to golden throbbing all the sea.
 Oh, and what needed one more wonder be
 For thee and me, Belovèd? thee and me?



RICH MAN, POOR MAN

*'Rich man, Poor man, Beggar man, Thief,
Doctor, Lawyer, Merchant, Chief.'*

I

HIGHWAY, stretched along the sun,
Highway, thronged till day is done;
Where the drifting Face replaces

Wave on wave on wave of faces,

And you count them, one by one:

*'Rich man — Poor man — Beggar man —
Thief:*

Doctor — Lawyer — Merchant — Chief.'

Is it soothsay? — Is it fun?

Young ones, like as wave and wave;

Old ones, like as grave and grave;

" Tide on tide of human faces

With what human undertow!

Rich man, poor man, beggar-man, thief! —

Tell me of the eddying spaces,

RICH MAN, POOR MAN 165

Show me where the lost ones go;
Like and lost, as leaf and leaf.
What's your secret grim refrain
Back and forth and back again,
Once, and now, and always so?
Three days since, and who was Thief?
Three days more, and who 'll be Chief?
Oh, is that beyond belief,
Doctor, Lawyer — Merchant-Chief?

*(Down, like grass before the mowing;
On, like wind in its mad going :—
Wind and dust forever blowing.)*

Highway, shrill with murderous pride,
Highway, of the swarming tide!
Why should my way lead me deeper?
I am not my Brother's keeper.

II

Byway, ambushed with the dark,
Byway, where the ears may hark;
Live and fierce when day is done,
You, that do without the Sun :—
What's this game you bring to nought?—

166 THE SINGING MAN

Muttering like a thing distraught,
 Reckoning like a simpleton?
 (Since the hearing must be brief, —
 Living or a dying thief!)

Cobbled with the anguished stones
 That the thoroughfare disowns;
 Stones they gave you for your bread
 Of the disinherited!

Where the Towers of Hunger loom,
 Crowding in the dregs of doom;
 Where the lost sky peering through
 Sees no more the grudging grass, —
 Only this mud-mirrored blue,
 Like some shattered looking-glass.

*(Under, with the sorry reaping!
 Underneath the stones of weeping,
 For the Dark to have in keeping.)*

Byway, you, so foully marred;
 You, whose sodden walls and scarred,
 See no light, but only where
 Fevered lamps are set to stare
 In the eyes of such despair!
 Tell me — as a Byway can —
 Was this Beggar once a Man?

‘Rich man — Poor man — Beggar man — Thief!’

Like and lost as leaf and leaf.

Stammering out your wrongs and shames,

Must you cry their very names?

Must you sob your shame, your grief?

— *‘Poor man — Poor man! — Beggar — Thief.’*

III

Highway, where the Sun is wide ;

Byway, where the lost ones hide,

Byway, where the Soul must hark,

Byway, dreadful with the Dark :

Can you nothing do with Man?

Doctor, Lawyer, Merchant, Chief,

Learns he nothing, even of grief?

Must it still be all his wonder

Some men soar, while some go under?

He has heard, and he has seen :

Make him know the thing you mean.

He has prayed since time began, —

He ’s so curious of the Plan !

He will pray you till he die,

For the Whence and for the Why ;

Mad for wisdom — when ’t is cheaper !

168 THE SINGING MAN

*'Why should my way lead me deeper?
Am I, then, my Brother's keeper?'*

Show him, Byway, if you can;
Lest he end as he began,
Rich and poor, — this beggar, Man.



*But we did walk in Eden,
Eden, the garden of God ; —
There, where no beckoning wonder
Of all the paths we trod,
No choiring sun-filled vineyard,
No voice of stream or bird,
But was some radiant oracle
And flaming with the Word !*

*Mine ears are dim with voices ;
Mine eyes yet strive to see
The black things here to wonder at,
The mirth, — the misery.
Beloved, who wert with me there,
How came these shames to be ? —
On what lost star are we ?*

*Men say : The paths of gladness
By men were never trod ! —
But we have walked in Eden,
Eden, the garden of God.*



THE FOUNDLING

BEAUTIFUL Mother, I have toiled all
day ;
And I am wearied. And the day is done.
Now, while the wild brooks run
Soft by the furrows — fading, gold to gray,
Their laughter turned to musing — ah, let me
Hide here my face at thine unheeding knee,
Beautiful Mother ; if I be thy son.

The birds fly low. Gulls, starlings, hoverers,
Along the meadows and the paling foam,
All wings of thine that roam
Fly down, fly down. One reedy murmur blurs
The silence of the earth ; and from the warm
Face of the field the upward savors swarm
Into the darkness. And the herds are home.

All they are stalled and folded for their rest,
The creatures : cloud-fleece young that
leap and veer ;
Mad-mane and gentle ear ;
And breath of loving-kindness. And that best,—

O shaggy house-mate, watching me from far,
 With human-aching heart, as I a star —
 Tempest of plumèd joys, just to be near !

So close, so like, so dear ; and whom I love
 More than thou lovest them, or lovest me.
 So beautiful to see,

Ah, and to touch ! When those far lights above
 Scorch me with farness — lights that call and
 call

To the far heart, and answer not at all ;
 Save that they will not let the darkness be.

And what am I ? That I alone of these
 Make me most glad at noon ? That I
 should mark

The after-glow go dark ?

This hour to sing — but never have — heart's-
 ease !

That when the sorrowing winds fly low, and
 croon

Outside our happy windows their old rune,
 Beautiful Mother, I must wake, and hark ?

Who am I ? Why for me this iron *Must* ?

Burden the moon-white ox would never bear ;
 Load that he cannot share,

172 THE SINGING MAN

He, thine imperial hostage of the dust.

Else should I look to see the god's surprise
Flow from his great unscornful, lovely eyes —
The ox thou gavest to partake my care.

Yea, all they bear their yoke of sun-filled hours.

I, lord at noon, at nightfall no more free,
Take on more heavily

The yoke of hid, intolerable Powers.

— Then pushes here, in my forgetful hand,
This near one's breathless plea to understand.
Starward I look ; he, even so, at me !

And she who shines within my house, my sight
Of the heart's eyes, my hearth-glow, and
my rain,

My singing's one refrain —

Are there for her no tidings from the height ?

For her, my solace, likewise lost and far,
Islanded with me here, on this lone star

Washed by the ceaseless tides of dark and
light.

What shall it profit, that I built for her

A little wayside shelter from the stark
Sky that we hear, and mark ?

THE FOUNDLING 173

Lo, in her eyes all dreams that ever were !
And cheek-to-cheek with me she shares the
quest,
Her heart, as mine for her, sole tented rest
From light to light of day ; from dark —
till Dark.

Yea, but for her, how should I greatly care
Whither and whence? But that the dark
should blast
Our bright! To hold her fast, —
Yet feel this dread creep gray along the air.
To know I cannot hold her so my own,
But under surge of joy, the surges moan
That threaten us with parting at the last !

Beautiful Mother, I am not thy son.
I know from echoes far behind the sky.
I know; I know not why.
Even from thy golden, wide oblivion:
Thy careless leave to help thy harvesting,
Thy leave to work a little, live, and sing;
Thy leave to suffer — yea, to sing and die,
Beautiful Mother ! . . .
Ah, Whose child am I?



*Love sang to me. And I went down the stair,
And out into the darkness and the dew;
And bowed myself unto the little grass,
And the blind herbs, and the unshapen dust
Of earth without a face. So let me be.*

*For as I hear, the singing makes of me
My own desire, and momentarily I grow.
Yea, all the while with hands of melody,
The singing makes me, out of what I was,
Even as a potter shaping Eden clay.*

*Ever Love sings, and saith in words that sing,
'Beloved, thus art thou; and even so
Lovely art thou, Beloved!' — Even so,
As the Sea weaves her path before the light,
I hear, I hear, and I am glorified.*

*Love sang to me, and I am glorified
Because of some commandment in the stars.
And I shall grow in favour and in shining,
Till at the last I am all-beautiful;
Beautiful, for the day Love sings no more.*



THE FEASTER

O H, who will hush that cry outside the
doors,

While we are glad within?

Go forth, go forth, all you my servitors;

(And gather close, my kin.)

Go out to her. Tell her we keep a feast, —

Lost Loveliness who will not sit her down

Though we implore.

It is her silence binds me unreleased,

It is her silence that no flute can drown,

It is her moonlit silence at the door,

Wide as the whiteness, but a fire on high

That frights my heart with an immortal Cry,

Calling me evermore.

Louder, you viols; — louder, O my harp;

Let me not hear her voice;

And drown her keener silence, silver-sharp,

With waves of golden noise!

For she is wise as Eden, even mute,

To search my spirit through the deep and
height

Again, again.

176 THE SINGING MAN

Outpierce her with your singing, dawnlike flute ;
And you, gloom over, viols of the night
With colors lost in umber, — with sweet
pain
Of richest world's desire, — prevail, sing down
All memory with pleading, so you drown
Her merciless refrain !

Oh, can you not with music, nor with din,
Save me the stress and stir
In my lone spirit, throned among my kin,
From that same voice of her? —
The never ending query she hath had
Only to wake my Soul, and only then
Wake it to weep?
With ' *Why?* ' and ' *Art thou happy? Art thou
glad?* '
And hast thou fellowship with fellow-men?
So, through my mirth and underneath my
sleep ;
Her voice, — abysmal hunger unfulfilled ; —
The calling, calling, never to be stilled, —
Calling of deep to deep.

But I have that shall fill this wound of mine,
Since Loveliness must be ; —

Since Loveliness must save us, or we pine
 And perish utterly.
 All that the years have left us, undismayed
 Of age or death ; and happier fair than truth,
 — When truth is fair !
 Shapes of immortal sweetness, to persuade
 Iron and fire and marble to their youth ;
 Wild graces trapped from the three kingdoms'
 lair
 Of wildest Beauty ; shadow and smile and
 hush ;
 — Fleet color, of a daybreak, of a blush,
 For my sad soul to wear !

Let April fade ! For me, unfading bloom ! . . .
 The little fruitless seed
 Deep sown of fire within the midmost gloom,
 A sterner fire to feed : —
 The rainbow, frozen in a lasting dew ;
 Green-gazing emerald, fresh as grass beneath
 The placid rose.
 Fair pearl, and you, fair pearl, and you and
 you,
 Rained from the moon, and kissing in a
 wreath,
 As moment unto eager moment goes !

178 THE SINGING MAN

Look back at me, you sapphires blue and
wise

With farthest twilight, blue resplendent eyes
That never weep, nor close.

O house me, glories ! Give me house and home
Here for my homelessness.

Set forth for me the wine, the honeycomb
Whereto desire saith ' Yes ! '

O Senses, weave me from all lovely dust
Some home-array, some fair familiar garb
For me, exiled.

Charm me some rare anointment I may trust
Against her query, searching like a barb
The dumbness of a heart unreconciled.

Clothe me with silver ; fold me from dismay ;
Save me from pity. For I hear her say,
' Alas, Alas, poor child ! '

' Alas, Alas, thou lost poor child, how long ?
Why wilt thou suffer want ?

Why must I hear thy weeping through thy song,
And see thine eyes grow gaunt ?

Making sad feast upon the crumbs of light
Shed long ago from heavenly highways where
Thy brethren are !

And thy heart smoulders in thee, to be bright,
Thy one sole refuge from thy one despair,
Fraying the thwarted body with a scar.
How long, before thine eyelids, desolate,
How long shall this thy dark dominion wait
For thee, belated Star?'



*Belovèd, if the Moon could weep,
Or if the Sun could see
How all these weltering alleys keep
Their outcast treasury!*

*O bitter, bitter-sweet! —
Beauty of babyhood, —
Earth's wistful uttermost of good
Flung out upon the street;
Fouled, even as the highways would,
With mirk and mire and bruise;
The cheek more petal-fine
Than rose before a shrine!
Those hands like star-fish in the ooze,
And fingers fain to cling
To any stronger thing!
And smiles, for one triumphal Gift,
Should one lean down, and lift!
And tendril hair; — O in such wise,
With wild lights aureoled,
The morning-glories twine and hold,
In some far paradise!*

*Oh well and deep, the foul ways keep
Lost treasure hid from day! —
Sun may not see: but only we,
Who look; and look away.*



THE GOLDEN SHOES

THE winds are lashing on the sea;
The roads are blind with storm.
And it's far and far away with me;
So bide you there, stay warm.
It's forth I must, and forth to-day;
And I have no path to choose.
The highway hill, it is my way still. —
Give me my golden shoes.

*God gave them me on that first day
I knew that I was young.
And I looked far forth, from west to north;
And I heard the Songs unsung.*

This cloak is worn too threadbare thin,
But ah, how weatherwise!
This girdle serves to bind it in;
What heed of wondering eyes? —
And yet beside, I wear one pride
— Too bright, think you, to use? —
That I must wear, and still keep fair. —
Give here my golden shoes.

*God gave them me, on that first day
 I heard the Stars all chime.
 And I looked forth far, from road to star;
 And I knew it was far to climb.*

They would buy me house and hearth, no doubt,
 And the mirth to spend and share;
 Could I sell that gift, and go without,
 Or wear — what neighbors wear.
 But take my staff, my purse, my scrip;
 For I have one thing to choose.
 For you, — Godspeed! May you soothe your
 need.
 For me, my golden shoes!

*He gave them me, that far, first day
 When I heard all Songs unsung.
 And I looked far forth, from west to north.
 God saw that I was young!*

NOON AT PÆSTUM

LORD of the Sea, we sun-filled creatures
raise
Our hands among the clamorous
weeds, — we too.

Lord of the Sun, and of the upper blue,
Of all To-morrow, and all yesterdays,
Here, where the thousand broken names and
ways

Of worship are but shards we wandered
through,

There is no gift to offer, or undo ;
There is no prayer left in us, only praise.

Only to glory in this glory here,
Through the dead smoke of myriad sacri-
fice ;—

To look through these blue spaces, blind and
clear

Even as the seaward gaze of Homer's eyes ;
And from uplifted heart, and cup, to pour
Wine to the Unknown God. — We ask no more.

VESTAL FLAME

LIGHT, light, — the last :
Till the night be done,
Keep the watch for stars and sun, and
eyelids over-cast.

Once there seemed a sky,
Brooding over men.
Now no stars have come again, since their bright
good-bye!

Once my dreams were wise.
Now I nothing know;
Fasting and the dark have so put out my heart's
eyes.

But thy golden breath
Burns against my cheek.
I can feel and love, and seek all the rune it
saith.

Do not thou be spent,
Holy thing of fire, —
Only hope of heart's desire dulled with wonder-
ment!

While there bide these two
 Hands to bar the wind ;
 Though such fingers chill and thinned, shed
 no roses through.

While this body bends
 Only for thy guard ;
 Like a tower, to ward and worship all the light
 it sends.

It is not for fear
 Lest there ring some cry
 On the midnight, ' Rise and come. Lo, the
 Bridegroom near !'

It is not for pride,
 To be shining fair
 In a wedding-garment there, lighting home the
 Bride.

It is not to win
 Love, for hoarded toil,
 From those poor, with their spent oil, weeping,
 ' Light us in !' —

No ; but in despite
 Of all vigils set,
 Do I bind me to thee yet, — strangest thing of
 Light !

186 THE SINGING MAN

Only, all, for thee
Whatsoe'er thou art,
Smiling through the blinded heart, things it
cannot see.

Very Soul's Desire,
Take my life ; and live
By the rapture thine doth give, ecstasy of fire !

Hold thy golden breath !
For I feel, — not hear —
Spent with joy and fear to lose thee, all the
song it saith.

Light, light, my own :
Do not thou disown
Thy poor keeper-of-the-light, for Light's sake
alone.



*The dark had left no speech save hand-in-hand
Between us two the while, with others near.*

*Mine questioned thine with 'Why should I be
here?'*

'Yet bide thou here,' said thine, 'and understand.'

*And mine was mute; but strove not then to go;
And hid itself, and murmured, 'Do not bear
The listening in my heart!' Said thine, 'My Dear,
I will not bear it, ever. But I know.'*

*Said mine to thine: 'Let be. Now will I go!—
For you are saying,—you who do not speak,
This hand-in-hand is one day cheek-to-cheek!'
And said thy hand around me, 'Even so.'*

*Then mine to thine.—'Yea, I have been alone;
—Yet happy.—This is strange. This is not I!
You hold me, but you can not tell me why.'
And said thy hand to mine again, 'My Own.'*



THE PROPHET

ALL day long he kept the sheep :—
Far and early, from the crowd,
On the hills from steep to steep,
Where the silence cried aloud ;
And the shadow of the cloud
Wrapt him in a noonday sleep.

Where he dipped the water's cool,
Filling boyish hands from thence,
Something breathed across the pool
Stir of sweet enlightenments ;
And he drank, with thirsty sense,
Till his heart was brimmed and full.

Still, the hovering Voice unshed,
And the Vision unbeheld,
And the mute sky overhead,
And his longing, still withheld !
— Even when the two tears welled,
Salt, upon that lonely bread.

Vaguely blessèd in the leaves,
Dim-companioned in the sun,

Eager mornings, wistful eves,
Very hunger drew him on;
And To-morrow ever shone
With the glow the sunset weaves.

Even so, to that young heart,
Words and hands, and Men were dear;
And the stir of lane and mart
After daylong vigil here.
Sunset called, and he drew near,
Still to find his path apart.

When the Bell, with gentle tongue,
Called the herd-bells home again,
Through the purple shades he swung,
Down the mountain, through the glen;
Towards the sound of fellow-men, —
Even from the light that clung.

Dimly too, as cloud on cloud,
Came that silent flock of his:
Thronging whiteness, in a crowd,
After homing twos and threes;
With the thronging memories
Of all white things dreamed and vowed.

Through the fragrances, alone,
By the sudden-silent brook,
From the open world unknown,
To the close of speech and book;
There to find the foreign look
In the faces of his own.

Sharing was beyond his skill;
Shyly yet, he made essay:
Sought to dip, and share, and fill
Heart's-desire, from day to day.
But their eyes, some foreign way,
Looked at him; and he was still.

Last, he reached his arms to sleep,
Where the Vision waited, dim,
Still beyond some deep-on-deep.
And the darkness folded him,
Eager heart and weary limb. —
All day long, he kept the sheep.

THE LONG LANE

ALL through the summer night, down
the long lane in flower,
The moon-white lane,
All through the summer night,—dim as a
shower,
Glimmer and fade the Twain :
Over the cricket hosts, throbbing the hour by
hour,
Young voices bloom and wane.

Down the long lane they go, and past one
window, pale
With visions silver-blurred ;
Stirring the heart that waits,—the eyes that
fail
After a spring deferred.
Query, and hush, and Ah !—dim through a
moon-lit veil,
The same one word.

Down the long lane, entwined with all the fra-
grance there ;
The lane in flower somehow

192 THE SINGING MAN

With youth, and plighted hands, and star-strewn
air,
And muted 'Thee' and 'Thou': —
All the wild bloom and reach of dreams that
never were,
— Never to be, now.

So, in the throbbing dark, where ebbs the old
refrain,
A starved heart hears.
And silver-bright, and silver-blurred again
With moonlight and with tears.
All the long night they go, down the long sum-
mer lane,
The long, long years.

*Ah but, Belovèd, men may do
All things to music ; — march, and die ;
And wear the longest vigil through,*

. . . And say good-by.

*All things to music ! — Ah, but where
Peace never falls upon the air ; —
These city-ways of dark and din
Where greed has shut and barred them in !
And thundering, swart against the sky,
That whirlwind, — never to go by —*

*Of tracks and wheels, that overhead
Beat back the senses with their roar
And menace of undying war, —*

War — war — for daily bread !

*All things to silence ! Ah, but where
Men dwell not, but must make a lair ; —
And Sorrow may not sit alone,
Nor Love bear music of its own ;
And Thought that strives to breast that sea
Must struggle even for memory.*

*Day-long, night-long, — besieging din
To thrust all pain the deeper in ! —
And drown the flutter of first-breath ;
And batter at the doors of Death.*

*To lull their dearest : — watch their dead ;
While the long thunders overhead,
Gather and break forevermore,
Eternal tides — eternal War,
War — war — Bread — bread !*



ALISON'S MOTHER TO THE BROOK

BROOK, of the listening grass,
Brook of the sun-fleckt wings,
Brook of the same wild way and flicker-
ing spell!

Must you begone? Will you forever pass,
After so many years and dear to tell? —

Brook of all hoverings . . .

Brook that I kneel above;

Brook of my love.

Ah, but I have a charm to trouble you;

A spell that shall subdue

Your all-escaping heart, unheedful one

And unremembering!

Now, when I make my prayer

To your wild brightness there

That will but run and run,

O mindless Water! —

Hark, — now will I bring

A grace as wild, — my little yearling daughter,

My Alison.

196 THE SINGING MAN

Heed well that threat ;
And tremble for your hill-born liberty
So bright to see ! —
Your shadow-dappled way, unthwarted yet,
And the high hills whence all your dearness
bubbled ; —

You, never to possess !
For let her dip but once — O fair and fleet, —
Here in your shallows, yes,
Here in your silverness
Her two blithe feet, —
O Brook of mine, how shall your heart be
troubled !

The heart, the bright unmothering heart of you,
That never knew. —
(O never, more than mine of long ago.
How could we know ? —)
For who should guess
The shock and smiting of that perfectness ? —
The lily-thrust of those ecstatic feet
Unpityingly sweet ? —
Sweet beyond all the blurred blind dreams that
grobe
The upward paths of hope ?
And who could guess

ALISON'S MOTHER 197

The dulcet holiness,
The lilt and gladness of those jocund feet,
Unpityingly sweet?
Ah, for your coolness that shall change and
 stir

With every glee of her! —
Under the fresh amaze
That drips and glistens from her wiles and
 ways;

When the endearing air
That everywhere
Must twine and fold and follow her, shall be
Rippled to ring on ring of melody, —
Music, like shadows from the joy of her,
Small starry Reveller! —
When from her triumphings, —
All frolic wings —
There soars beyond the glories of the height,
The laugh of her delight!

And it shall sound, until
Your heart stand still;
Shaken to human sight;
Struck through with tears and light;
One with the one desire
Unto that central Fire

198 THE SINGING MAN

Of Love the Sun, whence all we lighted are
Even from clod to star.

And all your glory, O most swift and sweet! —
And all your exultation only this ;
To be the lowly and forgotten kiss
Beneath those feet.

You that must ever pass, —
You of the same wild way, —
The silver-bright good-bye without a look! —
You that would never stay,
For the beseeching grass . . .
Brook! —



*You, Four Walls,
Wall not in my heart !
When the lovely night-time falls
All so welcomely,
Blinding, sweet hearth-fire,
Light of heart's desire,
Blind not, blind not me !
Unto them that weep apart, —
While you glow, within,
Wreckt, despairing kin, —
Dark with misery :
— Do not blind my heart !*

*You, close Heart !
Never hide from mine
Worlds that I divine
Through thy human dearness.
O belovèd Nearness,
Hallow all I understand
With thy hand-in-hand ; —
All the lights I seek,
With thy cheek-to-cheek ;
All the loveliness I loved apart.*

*You, heart's Home ! —
Wall not in my heart.*



CANTICLE OF THE BABE

I

OVER the broken world, the dark gone
by,
Horror of outcast darkness torn with
wars;

And timeless agony
Of the white fire, heaped high by blinded Stars,
Unfaltering, unaghost ; —
Out of the midmost Fire
At last, — at last, —
A Cry ! . . .
O darkness' one desire, —
O darkness, have you heard ? —
Black Chaos, blindly striving towards the Word?
— The Cry !

Behold thy conqueror, Death !
Behold, behold from whom
It flutters forth, that triumph of First-Breath,
Victorious one that can but breathe and cling, —
This pulsing flower, — this weaker than a wing,
Halcyon thing ! —
Cradled above unfathomable doom.

II

Under my feet, O Death,
Under my trembling feet!
Back, through the gates of hell, now give me
way.

I come. — I bring new Breath!
Over the trampled shards of mine own clay,
That smoulder still, and burn,
Lo, I return!
Hail, singing Light that floats
Pulsing with chorused motes:—
Hail to thee, Sun, that lookest on all lands!
And take thou from my weak undying hands,
A precious thing, unblemished, undefiled:—
Here, on my heart uplift,
Behold the Gift,—
Thy glory and my glory, and my child!

III

*(And our eyes were opened; eyes that had been
holden.*

*And I saw the world, and the fruits thereof.
And I saw their glories, scarlet-stained and golden,
All a crumbled dust beneath the feet of Love.*

*And I saw their dreams, all of nothing
worth;*

*But a path for Love, for Him to walk above,
And I saw new heaven, and new earth.)*

IV

The grass is full of murmurs ;
The sky is full of wings ;
The earth is full of breath.
With voices, choir on choir
With tongues of fire,
They sing how Life out-sings —
Out-numbers Death.

V

Who are these that fly
As doves, and as doves to the windows?
Doves, like hovering dreams round Love that
slumbereth ;
Silvering clouds blown by,
Doves and doves to the windows, —
Warm through the radiant sky their wings beat
breath.
They are the world's new-born :
Doves, doves to the windows !

CANTICLE OF THE BABE 203

Lighting, as flakes of snow ;
Lighting, as flakes of flame ;
Some to the fair sown furrows ;
Some to the huts and burrows
Choked of the mire and thorn, —
Deep in the city's shame.
Wind-scattered wreaths they go,
Doves, and doves, to the windows ;
Some for worshipping arms, to shelter and fold,
and shrine ;
Some to be torn and trodden,
Withered and waste, and sodden ;
Pitiful, sacred leaves from Life's dishonored vine.

VI

O Vine of Life, that in these reaching fingers,
Urges a sunward way !
Hold here and climb, and halt not, that there
lingers
So far outstripped, my halting, wistful clay.
Make here thy foothold of my rapturous
heart, —
Yea, though the tendrils start
To hold and twine !
I am the heart that nursed

Thy sunward thirst.

A little while, a little while, O Vine,

My own and never mine,

Feed thy sweet roots with me

Abundantly.

O wonder-wildness of the pushing Bud

With hunger at the flood,

Climb on, and seek, and spurn.

Let my dull spirit learn

To follow with its longing, as it may,

While thou seek higher day. —

But thou, the reach of my own heart's desire,

Be free as fire !

Still climb and cling ; and so

Outstrip, — outgrow.

O Vine of Life, my own and not my own,

So far am I outgrown !

High as I may, I lift thee, Soul's Desire.

— Lift thou me higher.

*And thou, Wayfaring Woman, whom I meet
On all the highways,—every brimming street,
Mother of Harvests, is it thou, grown gaunt
With work and want?
At last, and with what shamed and stricken eyes,
I see through thy disguise
Of drudge and Exile,—even the holy boon
That silvers yonder in the Harvest-moon;—
That dimly underglows
The furrows of thy worn immortal face,
With mother-grace.*

*O Queen and Burden-bearer, what of those
To whom thou gavest the lily and the rose
Of thy far youth? . . . For whom,
Out of the wondrous loom
Of thine enduring body, thou didst make
Garments of beauty, cunningly adorned,
But only for Death's sake!
Largess of life, but to lie waste and scorned.—
Could not such cost of pain,
Nor daily utmost of thy toil prevail? —
But they must fade, and pale,
And wither from thy desolated throne? —*

*And still no Summer give thee back again
Thine own?*

*Lady of Sorrows,—Mother,—Drudge august,
Behold me in the dust.*



GLADNESS

U NTO my Gladness then I cried :
‘ I will not be denied !

Answer me now ; and tell me why
Thou dost not fall, as a broken star
Out of the Dark where such things are,
And where such bright things die.
How canst thou, with thy fountain dance
Shatter clear sight with radiance ? —
How canst thou reach and soar, and fling,
Over my heart’s dark shuddering,
Unearthly lights on everything ?
What dost thou see ? What dost thou know ?’
My Gladness said to me, bowed below,
‘ Gladness I am : created so.’

‘ And dare’st thou, in my mortal veins
Sing, with the Spring’s descending rains ?
While in this hour, and momentarily,
Forth of myself I look, and see
Torn treasure of my heart’s Desire ;
And human glories in the mire,

That should make glad some paradise !—
 The childhood strewn in foulest place,
 The girlhood, plundered of its grace ;
 The eyelids shut upon spent eyes
 That never looked upon thy face !
 Answer me, thou, if answer be !’

My Gladness said to me :
 ‘ Weep if thou wilt ; yea, weep, and doubt.
 I may not let the Sun go out.’

Then to my Gladness still I cried :
 ‘ And how canst thou abide ? —
 Here, where my listening heart must hark
 These sorrows rising from the Dark
 Where still they starve, and strive and die,
 Who bear each heaviest penalty
 Of humanhood ; — nor grasp, nor guess,
 The garment’s hem of happiness ! —
 The spear-wound throbbing in my song,
 It throbs more bitterly than wrong, —
 It burns more wildly than despair, —
 The will to share,
 The will to share !
 Little I knew, — the blind-fold I, —

Joy would become like agony, —
Like arrows of the Sun in me !

.
I hold thee here. I have thee, now, —
And I am human. But what art thou !’

My Gladness answered me :
‘ Wayfarer, wilt thou understand ? —
Follow me on. And keep my hand.’

THE NIGHTINGALE UNHEARD

YES, Nightingale, through all the summer-time
We followed on, from moon to golden moon ;

From where Salerno day-dreams in the noon,
And the far rose of Pæstum once did climb.

All the white way beside the girdling blue,
Through sun-shrill vines and campanile chime,
We listened ; — from the old year to the new.
Brown bird, and where were you ?

You, that Ravello lured not, throned on high
And filled with singing out of sun-burned
throats !

Nor yet Minore of the flame-sailed boats ;
Nor yet — of all bird-song should glorify —
Assisi, Little Portion of the blest,
Assisi, in the bosom of the sky,
Where God's own singer thatched his sun-
ward nest ;
That little, heavenliest !

NIGHTINGALE UNHEARD 211

And north and north, to where the hedge-rows
are,

That beckon with white looks an endless
way;

Where, through the fair wet silverness of
May,

A lamb shines out as sudden as a star,

Among the cloudy sheep; and green, and
pale,

The may-trees reach and glimmer, near or far,

And the red may-trees wear a shining veil.

— And still, no nightingale!

The one vain longing, — through all journey-
ings,

The one: in every hushed and hearkening
spot, —

All the soft-swarming dark where you were
not,

Still longed for! Yes, for sake of dreams and
wings,

And wonders, that your own must ever make
To bower you close, with all hearts' treasurings;

And for that speech toward which all hearts
do ache; —

Even for Music's sake.

212 THE SINGING MAN

But most, his music whose belovèd name
 Forever writ in water of bright tears,
 Wins to one grave-side even the Roman years,
 That kindle there the hallowed April flame
 Of comfort-breathing violets. By that shrine
 Of Youth, Love, Death, forevermore the same,
 Violets still! — When falls, to leave no sign,
 The arch of Constantine.

Most for his sake we dreamed. Tho' not as he,
 From that lone spirit, brimmed with human
 woe,
 Your song once shook to surging overflow.
 How was it, sovran dweller of the tree,
 His cry, still throbbing in the flooded shell
 Of silence with remembered melody,
 Could draw from you no answer to the spell?
 — O Voice, O Philomel?

Long time we wondered (and we knew not
 why): —
 Nor dream, nor prayer, of wayside gladness
 born,
 Nor vineyards waiting, nor reproachful thorn,
 Nor yet the nested hill-towns set so high
 All the white way beside the girdling blue, —

NIGHTINGALE UNHEARD 213

Nor olives, gray against a golden sky,
 Could serve to wake that rapturous voice of
 you !

 But the wise silence knew.

O Nightingale unheard ! — Unheard alone,
 Throughout that woven music of the days
 From the faint sea-rim to the market-place,
And ring of hammers on cathedral stone ! —
 So be it, better so: that there should fail
For sun-filled ones, one blessèd thing unknown.
 To them, be hid forever, — and all hail !
 Sing never, Nightingale.

Sing, for the others ! Sing; to some pale cheek
 Against the window, like a starving flower.
Loose, with your singing, one poor pilgrim
 hour

Of journey, with some Heart's Desire to seek.
Loose, with your singing, captives such as
 these

In misery and iron, hearts too meek,
 For voyage — voyage over dreamful seas
 To lost Hesperides.

Sing not for free-men. Ah, but sing for whom
 The walls shut in; and even as eyes that
 fade,

214 THE SINGING MAN

The windows take no heed of light nor
shade,—

The leaves are lost in mutterings of the loom.
Sing near! So in that golden overflowing
They may forget their wasted human bloom;
Pay the devouring days their all, unknow-
ing,—

Reck not of life's bright going!

Sing not for lovers, side by side that hark;
Nor unto parted lovers, save they be
Parted indeed by more than makes the Sea.
Where never hope shall meet — like mounting
lark —

Far Joy's uprising; and no memories
Abide to star the music-haunted dark:
To them that sit in darkness, such as these,
Pour down, pour down heart's-ease.

Not in kings' gardens. No; but where there
haunt

The world's forgotten, both of men and
birds;
The alleys of no hope and of no words,
The hidings where men reap not, though they
plant;

NIGHTINGALE UNHEARD 215

But toil and thirst — so dying and so born ;—
And toil and thirst to gather to their want,

From the lean waste, beyond the daylight's
scorn,

— To gather grapes of thorn!

.
And for those two, your pilgrims without tears,
Who prayed a largess where there was no
dearth,

Forgive it to their human-happy ears :

Forgive it them, brown music of the Earth,

Unknowing, — though the wiser silence knew !

Forgive it to the music of the spheres

That while they walked together so, the Two
Together, — heard not you.

ENVOI

*Belovèd, till the day break,
Leave wide the little door ;
And bless, to lack and longing,
Our brimming more-and-more.*

*Is love a scantèd portion,
That we should board thereof? —
Oh, call unto the deserts,
Belovèd and my Love!*

HARVEST MOON

POEMS OF THE WORLD WAR AND INTERLUDES

(Published in 1917)



Halt! — Who goes there?

A Woman.

—— *Whence? And where?*

Soldier, I cannot tell. I only know

This dark is still the world.

And I must dare.

Who bade you try?

My man-child here, his cry.

—— *I cannot let you by;*

Woman, I stand on guard.

—— And I.



HARVEST MOON

O VER the twilight field,
Over the glimmering field
And bleeding furrows, with their sodden
yield

Of sheaves that still did writhe,
After the scythe ;
The teeming field, and darkly overstrewn
With all the garnered fullness of that noon, —
Two looked upon each other.
One was a Woman, men had called their mother :
And one the Harvest Moon.

And one the Harvest Moon
Who stood, who gazed
On those unquiet gleanings, where they bled ;
Till the lone Woman said :

‘ But we were crazed . . .
We should laugh now together, I and you ;
We two.
You, for your ever dreaming it was worth
A star’s while to look on, and light the earth ;
And I, for ever telling to my mind

Glory it was and gladness, to give birth
To human kind.

I gave the breath,— and thought it not amiss,
I gave the breath to men,
For men to slay again ;
Lording it over anguish, all to give
My life, that men might live,
For this.

‘ You will be laughing now, remembering
We called you once Dead World, and barren
thing.

Yes, so we called you then,
You, far more wise
Than to give life to men.’

Over the field that there
Gave back the skies
A scattered upward stare
From sightless eyes,
The furrowed field that lay
Striving awhile, through many a bleeding dune
Of throbbing clay, — but dumb and quiet soon,
She looked ; and went her way,
The Harvest Moon.

CRADLE SONG

I

LORD GABRIEL, wilt thou not rejoice
When at last a little boy's
Cheek lies heavy as a rose,
And his eyelids close?

Gabriel, when that hush may be,
This sweet hand all heedfully
I'll undo, for thee alone,
From his mother's own.

Then the far blue highways paven
With the burning stars of heaven,
He shall gladden with the sweet
Hasting of his feet:—

Feet so brightly bare and cool,
Leaping, as from pool to pool;
From a little laughing boy
Splashing rainbow joy!

Gabriel, wilt thou understand
How to keep his hovering hand?—
Never shut, as in a bond,
From the bright beyond?—

Nay, but though it cling and close
Tightly as a climbing rose,
Clasp it only so, — aright,
Lest his heart take fright.

*(Dormi, dormi, tu.
The dusk is hung with blue.)*

II

Lord Michael, wilt not thou rejoice
When at last a little boy's
Heart, a shut-in murmuring bee,
Turns him unto thee?

Wilt thou heed thine armor well, —
To take his hand from Gabriel,
So his radiant cup of dream
May not spill a gleam?

He will take thy heart in thrall,
Telling o'er thy breastplate, all
Colors, in his bubbling speech,
With his hand to each.

*(Dormi, dormi tu.
Sapphire is the blue ;*

*Pearl and beryl, they are called,
Chrysoprase and emerald,
Sard and amethyst.
Numbered so, and kissed.)*

Ah, but find some angel-word
For thy sharp, subduing sword!
Yea, Lord Michael, make no doubt
He will find it out:

(Dormi, dormi tu!)
His eyes will look at you.

III

Last, a little morning space,
Lead him to that leafy place
Where Our Lady sits awake,
For all mothers' sake.

Bosomed with the Blessèd One,
He shall mind her of her Son,
Once so folded from all harms,
In her shrining arms.

*(In her veil of blue,
Dormi, dormi tu.)*

So;—and fare thee well.

Softly,—Gabriel . . .

When the first faint red shall come,

Bid the Day-star lead him home,

For the bright world's sake,—

To my heart, awake.

PIETÀ[†]

I

YOU men of Antwerp, who have lifted
down
Once more from His high cross, the
Crucified,
And from the hands and feet, and piercèd side
Wiped your own blood, above that anguished
crown ;
There by the belfry-tower that glorified
The upward gaze of Flanders and Brabant,
Men of Namur, Liège, unconquered Ghent,
And leafy fair Ardennes ;
Is it with you again,
As with those far Judæan brother-men
Who saw their glory, and the living Word
Of all men's longing slain and sepulchered ?
His body left, alone,
Unto His own ;
And their despair, wherewith to seal the stone.

[†] Read at a Mass Meeting in Boston for the Belgian Relief Fund December 1, 1914.

And are your words the broken words they
had

As once they walked together and were sad,
Along the smouldering, desolated ways?

'Now is it many days

Since all these things were done,

Before the sun.

And He, the Very God that gave us breath,

Is scourged and put to death.'

Brothers, it is not true.

By all new-born compassion, now we know

The Lord is risen indeed ; and walks with you.

Yes, though your eyes are holden ; — yes,

Through all the wilderness ;

Through the black desert there,

The waste of rankling embers, where they go

As snowflakes on the air, —

Unknowing whither and unknowing whence, —

The wingless Innocents,

The little children. — And, of all that mourn !

Mothers of trampled sons,

Perishing, helpless ones,

The women, women, broken, bruised and

spent, —

Dragging a shattered flight to banishment,

Faint with the weight of woe in men unborn!
Homeless, and guiltless; west and west and
north,
Whither the lords of famine drive them forth,
Along the awful footprints trodden red; —
But shepherded
Of Him who had not where to lay His head.

Heroes, He walks with these,
The refugees.
Heroes, He walks with you
Your widening realm made new,
Your kingdom vaster now, than ever then;
Your world-wide empire in the souls of men.

II

And you, New World?
Now that the lightning-blast
Of tangled hates has left your heart aghast,
What is your answering deed
To men at need?
The Eyes, that once their startled eyes could see
Through the blue morning mist of Galilee,
Look on you now, with their one '*Lovest thou
me?*'

And with the cry of light that follows death,
'Thou knowest that we love Thee!' — sobs all
 breath.

And *'Feed my lambs,'* He saith.

Ah, by that word to keep,
 By all the sharpness of their more than death,
'With nothing left them but the eyes, to weep,'
 Shall we not feed His sheep?

III

Now, with the cold, draws near the holy time,
 When there shall sound no chime,
 From towers that look alone
 On glories overthrown.
 There shall no tongue of bell
 Proclaim Emmanuel,
 To mock with homage thus,
 Our God-with-us!

Far on the Syrian plains, the shepherds there
 May pipe to moon-lit air
 White tidings of the Hope of all men's dream, —
 Men yet blaspheme.
 O New World, do not mock
 The desolation of this perisht flock,

With chime or festival ;
While shames and sorrows call
Above the wind, the scourging, bitter wind,
For those who sinned, —
In that they held the unconquerable gate
Of human hope, against the hordes of hate !

Look on that Mother-Country, face to face ;
Stricken that men might live.
And to her ruin of a manger-place,
Gather, and rally ; — give !
O Fair-of-fortune, Hope and Humbleness,
Gather and garner ! — Bless
Your lowly offerings
Of precious things.

Open your treasure forth, for her ;
Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

DOMINION

[*To the Invaders*]

LORDS of disaster, waiting still to reap
New glory for the dooms that you have
sown,

New glory for the ruin, stone on stone,
And bleeding tribute wrung from them that
weep;

Great is your faith, above the watch you keep,
Till there shall spring some vintage of your own
Out of the tilth of blood and tears alone,
And trodden breath still crying from the deep!

Yet, lords of famine, one gift late-discerned,
But still a triumph and a dwelling place, —
One master-work of might is surely done.
Only your chosen way could so have earned
The men and brothers of the Belgian race,
Their everlasting stronghold in the Sun.

FULL CIRCLE

[*The Bandage-Makers*]

NOW no longer is it lace
In the golden market-place,
Nor a little twilight street
Where the day-long neighbors meet: —
To and fro, and face to face,
Talk and shuttle, with the lace.

— Long ago, and gray and past!
But they need us now at last;
They are wanting us again,
All our men.

Now it is no longer nets,
Brown above the morning sea; —
Sea no one of us forgets,
Heeding never such as we!
Now no sails to make or mend;
Sails, sails, — ships to send
Out forever, to the end!

Other work and other web
Given to our hands again;

For the flood,
For the ebb,
(Turn and fold, and fold again,)
Drop by drop, of shining blood,
Life-blood that we gave our men.

Well for me, well for you,
Work is ever yet to do;
Web to wear the daylight through;
Work to do!

From his first of swaddling-bands,
In our hands. —
Now he hears, and understands.
All our spinning song complete,
So he have the winding-sheet.

Better so: the one refrain, —
Back to us, to us again!
All our master-building thus,
Back to us.

This to wind, and this to bathe;
Here, to lull with swathe on swathe;
So to staunch, and so to bind
Darkness softly on our blind. —

Hide away the ruin, frayed
From the bodies that we made :
Till that all things be fulfilled ;
All our treasure spent and spilled ;
With the darkening of the sun,
When the last of light is gone.

Kyrié elëison,

Christé elëison !

MILITARY NECESSITY

I SCARIOT, never more thy stricken name
Sound now the blinded deeps of infamy;
Nor thy poor hurried, faltering sin shall be
The world-worn symbol of an utmost shame.
A thousand years, two thousand, still the same
Red gleam of torches, ever there to see
On the gray darkness of Gethsemane! —
Now, newer lights outflare their simple flame.

For you, half-hearted, must limp back to say —
With but one death of Christ to grieve about! —
‘Lo, I have sinned, in that I did betray . . .
Innocent blood.’

Now, — weak with no such doubt,
Men write: ‘No hate was here. Our chosen way
They chose to bar. —

And they are blotted out.’

DEAD CHIMES

WHERE the night smouldered,
Heaped, stone on stone,
They watched together,
Gods overthrown.
In the black desert,
With smoke for a shroud,
The wounds of their dumbness
Throbbled out, aloud.

One with the throbbing
Of the wounds of Time,
They spoke together;
They that once did chime.

‘I was that strong one,
That joyous lord
Over these valleys,
Where morning poured!
To our high places
My voice over-fills,
There lifted their faces,
All the young hills!

‘I was their tidings;
I, their Great Bell,
Gave them God’s greeting,
Through Gabriel.’

‘At the bidding of Mary,
With my sweet sound,
I blessed the rapt meadows
Kneeling around;—
Now battle-ground,
Now battle-ground!

‘With the voice of my pity
Poured forth as wine,
I folded my City:
It was all mine,
— Mine!

‘Here in my bosom,
Dove and bright dove
Nested them, under
The word of my love.’

‘*And they and their making, the mighty men and
skilled;
Men to dream dreams, and arise then, and build;—*

*Are they all parted? As the sunk sands?
And the mothering women, who spun with their
hands?*

Women wise-hearted?

Women, that knew

*Well to weave twinings; the scarlet of hue,
Purple, and silver and blue?*

*'They and their building; and their precious
things:*

Carven and glorious, with multitude of wings!

Woods sweet of savor, and golden overlaid;

Windows as dayskine for wonder, that they made.

These to be plunder,

And a shattered spoil:—

Incense of their burning, and sanctuary oil,

Treasure of their toil!'—

'Strong men at length,

That swung us to our towers,

Glad men of strength,

They were all ours,

Ours! . . .

Then, nave and spire,

Joy climbed and came.

Then, choir on choir,

Song burst as fire,
Song poured as flame !'

'And I, that called,
Full of God's breath,
Words that He saith,
Shall I be thrall'd
To iron death?'

'I that made glad
The hills round about,—
Shall the tongue of my glory
Now be plucked out? —
That said *All Hail!*
In the one Name,
Be so betrayed? —
Molten, and made
Some tool of shame?'

Where the night smouldered,
Heaped stone on stone,
These spoke together,
Exiles, alone:
Throbbing, even so;
They that one time,
Long while ago,
 . . . Did chime.

MEN HAVE WINGS AT LAST

[*The Air-Raid*]

WOLF, Wolf, — stay-at-home,
Prowler, — scout,
Clanless and castaways,
And ailing with the drought!
Out from your hidings, hither to the call;
Lift up your eyes to the high wind-fall;
Lift up your eyes from the stagnant spring;
Overhead, overhead! The dragon thing,
What should it bring? —
Poising on the wing?’

‘Wolf, wolf, old one, — I saw it, even I;
Yesterday, yesterday, the Thing came by. —
Prowling at the outpost of the last lean wood,
By the gray waste ashes where the minster stood,
And out through the cloister, where the belfry
fronts

The market-place, and the town was, once.
High, high, above the bright wide square,
And the folk all flocking together, unaware,
The thing with the wings came there.

Brother Vulture saw it,
And called me as it passed :
“ *Look and see, look and see,
Men have wings at last !* ”

‘ By the eyeless belfry I saw it, overhead,
Poise like a hawk, — like a storm unshed.
Near the huddled doves there, from a shattered
cote,
I watched too. — And it smote.

‘ Not a threat of thunder, not an armèd man,
Where the fury struck, and the fleet fire ran.
But girl-child, man-child, mothers and their
young,
New-born of woman with milk upon its tongue ;
Nursling where it clung !

‘ Not a talon reached they, then, the lords of
prey !
But left the red dregs there, rent and cast
away ; —
Fled from the spoil there, scattered things
accurst !
It was not for hunger ;
It was not for thirst.

‘From the eyeless belfry,
 Brother Vulture laughed :
*“This is all we have to see
 For his master-craft ?
 Old ones, — lean ones,
 Never now to fast,
 Men have wings at last !”*’

‘Brought they any tidings for us from the Sun?’

‘No, my chief, not one.’

‘Left they not a road-mark, how the way was
 won?’

‘No, my chief, none.

‘But girl-child, man-child, creature yet unborn,
 Doe and fawn together so, weltering and torn,
 New-born of woman where the flag-stones bled :
 (Better can the vultures do, for the shamèd
 dead !)

Road-dust, sobbing, where the lightnings burst !

It was not for hunger ;

It was not for thirst.’

‘Brought they not some token that the stars
 look on?’

‘No, my chief, none.’

‘Never yet a message from the highway over-
head?’

‘Brother, I have said.’

‘Old years, gray years, years of growing things,
We have toiled and kept the watch with our
wonderings,
But to see what thing should be, when that men
had wings.

‘Sea-mark, sea-wall, ships above the tide;
Mine and mole-way under-earth, to have its
hidden pride,
Not enough; not enough; more and more
beside.

‘Bridle for our proud of mane; then the triple
yoke;
Ox-goad and lash again, and bonded fellow-
folk!
Not enough; not enough;—for his master
stroke.

‘Thunder trapped and muttering and led away
for thrall,

Lightnings leashed together then, at his beck
and call;

Not enough; not enough, for his wherewithal!

‘ He must look with evil eye
On the spaces of the sky;
He must scheme and try!
While all we, with dread and awe,
Sheathing and unsheathing claw,
Watch apart, and prophesy
That we never saw.—

‘ Wings, to seek his more-and-more,
Where we knew us blind;
Wings, to make him conqueror
With his master-mind;
Wings, that he outwatch, outsoar
Eagle and his kind!

‘ Lo, the dream fulfilled at last! And the dread
outgrown,
Broken, as a bird’s heart; fallen, as a stone.
What was he, to make afraid?—
Hating all that he had made,
Hating all his own!

246 H A R V E S T M O O N

‘ Scatter to your strongholds, till the race is run.
(Doe and fawn together so, soon will it be done.)
Never now, never now, ship without a mast,
In the harbor of the sun, do you make fast!
 But the floods shall cleanse again
 Every blackened trail of men,
 Men with wings, at last!’

TO A DOG

SO, back again ?
— And is your errand done,
Unfailing one ?

How quick the gray world, at your morning
look,

Turns wonder-book !

Come in, — O guard and guest :

Come, O you breathless, from a life-long
quest !

Search here my heart ; and if a comfort be,

Ah, comfort me.

You eloquent one, you best

Of all diviners, so to trace

The weather-gleams upon a face ;

With wordless, querying paw,

Adventuring the law !

You shaggy Loveliness,

What call was it ? — What dream beyond a
guess,

Lured you, gray ages back,

From that lone bivouac

Of the wild pack ? —

Was it your need or ours? The calling trail
Of faith that should not fail?
Of hope dim understood? —
That you should follow our poor humanhood,
Only because you would!
To search and circle, — follow and outstrip,
Men and their fellowship;
And keep your heart no less,
Your to-and-fro of hope and wistfulness,
Through all world-weathers and against all
odds!

Can you forgive us, now? —
Your fallen gods?

HERITAGE

*A*ND if that men should cease from war,
What surety can there be
Of hardihood and sovereignty
And might, so battled for?
Whence shall a master draw his strength
And splendor, if so be, at length,
The strong man cease from war?’

Oh, he might some day light his mind
With fires that glowed when he lay blind;
The watch-fires of all motherkind. —
The ardors that encompassed him
While he lay hid, unmade and dim,
Beleaguered as a bonden thrall,
With her lone body for a wall.
And she, his stronghold of a year
Against the armaments of fear, —
Her arms his wreathèd cherubim,
Fought with the hosts of hell for him,
And smiling in the eyes of Death,
Tore from her heart his gift of breath.

*Yet, ‘Whence shall be their hardihood,
If men forbear to spill men’s blood?’*

From her uncounted agony
 Through climbing ages all worn by,
 Could he not learn the way to die,
 Transfigured with some radiant Why?
 From the same wells of hero-stuff,
 He still might draw duress enough
 To dare and suffer, — be, and build;
 Till some far flaming Dream fulfilled,
 Made the loud song in every vein
 Sing triumph to her, for her pain;
 Triumph, of one more glorious way
 Than plunder for a beast of prey;
 Triumph at last, against all odds
 Set up by the indifferent gods!

Man-child, — the starveling without help,
 Less able than a tiger's whelp, —
 Housed only, once, in her embrace,
 Weak bud of the destroying race!
 O fool and blind, and battled for,
 Whose strength is this you spill in war,
 But hers? — Who laughed the stars to scorn,
 When you were born. —

When you were born.

TWO SONGS OF A YEAR

(1914-1915)

I. CHILDREN'S KISSES

SO; it is nightfall then.
The valley flush
That beckoned home the way for herds
and men,
Is hardly spent.
Down the bright pathway winds, through veils
of hush
And wonderment.
Unuttered yet, the chime
That tells of folding-time;
Hardly the sun has set.
The trees are sweetly troubled with bright words
From new-alighted birds;—
And yet, . . .
Here,—round my neck, are come to cling and
twine,
The arms, the folding arms, close, close and
fain,
All mine!—
I pleaded to, in vain,
I reached for, only to their dimpled scorning,
Down the blue halls of Morning;

Where all things else could lure them on and on,
 Now here, now gone, —
 From bush to bush, from beckoning bough to
 bough,
 With bird-calls of *Come Hither!* —

 . . . Ah, but now,
 Now it is dusk. — And from his heaven of
 mirth,
 A wilding skylark, sudden dropt to earth
 Along the last low sunbeam yellow-moted,
 Athrob with joy, —
 There pushes here, a little golden Boy,
 Still-gazing with great eyes.
 And wonder-wise,
 All fragrancy, all valor silver-throated,
 My daughterling, my swan,
 My Alison!

Closer than homing lambs against the bars
 At folding-time, that crowd, all mother-warm,
 They crowd, — they cling, they wreathe;
 And thick as sparkles of the thronging stars,
 Their kisses swarm.

O Rose of being, at whose heart I breathe,
 Fold over; hold me fast

In the dark Eden of a blinding kiss.
And lightning heart's-desire, be still at last!
Heart can no more, —
Life can no more,
Than this.

II. THE SANS-FOYER

LOVE, that Love cannot share,
Now turn to air !
And fade to ashes, O my daily bread ;
Save only if you may
So be the stay
Of the un comforted.

Look down, you far-off lights,
From smoke-veiled heights, —
If there be dwelling in our wilderness !
For Love, the Refugee,
No stronghold can there be, —
No shelter more, while these go shelterless.

Love hath no home beside
His own two arms spread wide ; —
The only home, among all walls that are ;
So there may come to cling,
Some yet forlorn thing,
Feeling its way, along the blackened star !

SEA-DIRGE

SEA-BIRD, forever wailing through the
sky,
Sea-bird, forever searching, now let be.
Dash thy wild heart against the light, and die,
For sorrow on the sea.

Night-wind, that all the weeping years of time,
Sang a mad song of horror yet to be,
Now is the hour; let not that wild voice climb
The steep on steep of flaming prophecy.
Night-wind, let be.

Threaten no longer, with that drowning call,
The children, for their little moment stilled!
Now that the moon is turned to blood, and all,
All doom fulfilled.

SEED-TIME

WOMAN of the field, — by the sunset
furrow,
Lone-faring woman, woman at the
plough,
What of the harrow? — there so near their fore-
heads.

Can there be harvest, now?

‘My one Belovèd sowed here his body;
Under the furrows that open so red.
All that come home now, have we for our chil-
dren. —

They will be wanting bread.’

JUNE ROSE

YOU that put forth, warm and unshud-
dering
From the live vine, to breathe another
Spring,

Answering so the query of the air,

Red lips that dare!—

Parted and smiling now, —

This is the selfsame earth where men did plough
And plant; brown earth, and eyeless to foresee
What men could be.

Now the earth knows;

And the torn fields, furrowed to endless shame.

And you are there,

You kiss upon the air,

Without a tear to shed,

Over the million dead;

Nor yet for those

Outnumbering hearts turned ashes with their
dead.

Earth to earth,

Ashes to ashes,

Dust to dust. . . .

Oh, is it all the same then, to a rose?

That you dare be red?

ALL SOULS' EVE¹

MOTHER, my Mother, Mother-
Country,
Where is the window with the
light?

Wounded I come; groping I come,
Over a blackness, and a blight!

*'Hush you, hush you, my darling;
Question no more of the light.
Morning and evening were the first long day;
And now is the midmost night.'*

'Mother, my Mother, Mother-Country,
Why does the red, red ooze
Brim through my field where the brook did
run?
And the blood on thy heart there,—whose?'

¹ On All Souls' Day, November 2d, in many parts of Europe, a portion of bread is left on the cottage table with a lighted candle, to welcome home the souls of the dead who have died during the year.

' Hush you, hush you, my way-worn ;

Heed not to ask me whose.

Thy breath and mine, and the Earth's, are one ;

And one is our life we lose.'

' Mother, my Mother, Mother-Country,

Yet were the fields in bud.

And the harvest, when shall it rise again

Up through the fire and flood ?'

' Wonder not, wonder not, darling ;

Grieve not at fire nor at flood.

But when did ever a Mother, yet,

Drink of her children's blood ?'

' Mother, my Mother, Mother-Country,

Was it not all to save

Harvest of bread ? — Harvest of men ?

And the bright years, wave on wave ?'

' Search not, search not, my way-worn ;

Search neither weald nor wave.

One is their heavy reaping-time

To the Earth, that is one wide grave.'

‘ Ah, but my Mother,— Mother-Country,
When shall our triumph be?
Wounded I am,— blinded I am :
This,— is it Victory?’ . . .

‘ *O Man-child of my longing !
Plead with me not ;— let be.
Sleep on, till day. I will ask our way,
Of the stars far off, that see.*

STAR-GAZER

GOLDEN earth,
Now it is time to part,
To you, the new red wine that over-
flows
My dripping heart !

Golden friends,
That starred the long way through,
This the last breath,—in the last kiss,
To you.

Golden star,
Lean down, lean close a moment, and go by ;
Since it was you who bade me all the while,
Live,—sing, and die.

THE GLORIES TO THE DYING

EYES that widen to the light,
Dying eyes, fulfilled of Sight;

‘ Heart of ebb-tide, ebbing fast,
Do you know us at the last ?

‘ Do you know us, where we bring
All our thwarted offering ? —

‘ In our bright hands overflowing,
All the light there was for knowing,
Garnered to your going ?

‘ Longing, longing from the first,
So to rain upon your thirst ! —

‘ *Life, and could it shew you this
Only with the parting kiss ?*’

.

‘ Calling glories of the Sun,
All up-gathered in the one : —

THREE PARTING SONGS 263

‘ Ah, and can you see me now,
Eyes of light? — Fading brow?

‘ Harken, pitiful and dear !
Life it is at last, so near :
Life and all the lights thereof. —
Do you know me? Do you hear?
I was Love.’

*You that take your leave, alone,
Only now to find your own ! —
Could Life never tell you this,
Till the parting kiss ?*

THE MOMENT

LIFE had said no word to me :
I saw not. But now I see.

For I heard the trumpet call,
*'Live, live, — once for all,
Spend thy golden wherewithal !'*

O I heard the trumpet sing,
'Death, death, where is thy sting ?'

And the volley called to me,
'Grave, where is thy victory ?'

(Ah, but Mother, — close beside,
Look not as the Crucified,

With your eyes to ask me so,
Child, and did you never know ?)

For I heard the trumpet call,
*'Spend thy golden wherewithal !
Live, — give, — Fight and fall !'*
And I flung my all. —

THE NEIGHBORS

NOW at the end, neighbor,
Do you not see?
In the gray light of our late awaking,
How even he
Who brought this doom to be,
He too is ours,
And of our making?

We that sat by, neighbor,
We that were still;
That gave our souls to the weaving, the baking;
Veiling our foreheads
Under his will;
Still singing lullaby over heart-breaking.

There in the fields
We ploughed at his need;—
And the bright-sown field of the stars, we left
fallow.

To the small weed
We gave heavy heed;
While the Light pined,
That was ours to hallow!—

Praising, — praising,
His conquering hands;
And his wrath ; and his spoils, at his coming
 and going ! —
The strength of his limb,
As the glory of him ; —
We, the well-knowing.

We that knew well
Of Life, in the giving ;
Costly to build, neighbor ;
Costly with living.
He, from a babe,
Eager for taking
All of the perilous gifts of our making ; —
Swift, — skilled, at the breaking !

Were we not those,
Woman and mother,
Who stripped too well
The thorns from his rose ?
Who gave our all,
Even as he chose, —
Into the widening grasp of his hand ?
Though he be slayer, at last, of his brother,
How should he understand ? . . .

Here, at the end
Of the light of our forsaking,
Is not even he,
Who would be lord,
With the fire and the sword,
Still our man-child? —
Ours, and our making?

We that obeyed, —
Woman and wife!
We that sat dumb;
We that were lowly!
While all the breath and the voices of Life,
All things that are, —
From stubble to star, —
Sang, — *Holy, holy,*
Holy . . .

WOMAN-VIGIL

I

YOU that sleep not, Shadow moving at
midnight,
To and fro, where the windows glimmer
and darken,
To and fro, where you with your ailing treasure,
Lean down to harken :

You that sleep not, Shadow behind the case-
ment,
Toilful Shadow, gaunt from the cup of sorrow;
Humble, ceaseless, shaping late in the midnight,
Bread of to-morrow !

You, wan Shadow, wasting your lighted taper, —
Light of your eyes, at a stitch-by-stitch adorn-
ing;
Starven starlight, paling even as stars do,
Toward the gray morning :

You that keep your watch by the countless
windows,

Waking, working, there where they gleam and
darken,
Even you that over the wide world's breathing,
Lean down and harken: —

Dark Immortal, — Shadow of mortal woman,
Why awake, when the sentries sleep, and the
sages?

Towering Shadow, flung on the dark of night-
time,
Dark of the ages?

*(Loud from the tower
Swung the Bell.
And the sentry called,
'All's well!' . . .
The candle flared
Before the night.
The Shadow trimmed the light.)*

II

What new pride, you of the ceaseless vigil,
Knocks at your heart? Or what far folly of
questing
Stirs you now, between the loom and the
cradle? —
Woman unresting!

What vain-longing, — circle and cry of sea-
birds,

Holds your eyes, with the sleepless light beside
you?

All the besieging years, your toil and your
burden,

Who hath denied you?

Who hath said to you, ‘ Rest ; yea, rest for your
portion ’ ?

Who forbade your eyes their watch or their
weeping?

Who withheld the helpless years of the man-
child

From your sole keeping?

Mind of the moon is yours ; her song and her
strangeness :

Singing, spinning, — even as her earth-born
daughters

Spin, and sing ; yet laying her strong command-
ment

Over the waters.

*(The echoes died
Around the hour.*

*Back flew the doves,
 Back to the tower.
 The house lay dark
 In sleep, within.
 The Shadow turned, to spin.)*

III

Is it some new thirst, of a shining peril? —
 Glorious Death, men sing as they go to greet
 him,

Far and far? — But turn you again to your
 shelter!

 There shall you meet him;

Greet him, speak him fair, O hostess and hand-
 maid!

Loitering hearthside guest, what pride should
 he kindle?

Face to face with your waiting smile, — and
 holding

 Flax for the spindle!

Not for men's red harvest, weariless Woman?
 Spoils of empire? Triumph of shuddering won-
 der? —

272 H A R V E S T M O O N

You, who fought with vultures over your
treasure,

Yea, for such plunder!

You who shore your hair by the walls of Car-
thage! —

Gave your haloing hair, but to arm the bow-
men, —

Smiting white through that long-spent storm
of arrows,

Lightnings of omen!

*(One by one,
The stars went by;
The Shadow barked
For a cry.
The sentry went,
Whose watch was done.
. . . The Shadow spun.)*

IV

Not yet spent, with the night of that endless
travail? —

Sons of men, slaying the sons of mothers!

Not yet spent? For all shed life of your giving?

Yours, not another's.

Who but you, to spin of your breath with beauty?
Pluck the light of the stars you fight in their
courses? —

Light, for the morning-gaze of the torn young
eyelids,
Trampled of horses!

Who but you, — to bear the bloom and the
burden;

Breath and death, and doom of the world, for
your share?

Breath for men, and men that shall die to-
morrow; —

Glory of warfare!

Breath for men; bodies for men, — for women;
Women to breathe and bloom, and bring forth
in sorrow

Men, — men, to nurture and rear as worship;
Men for to-morrow!

*(The tide ebbed;
The tide turned;
The wind died;
The taper burned.
The cock crew
That night was done.
. . . The Shadow spun.)*

V

Shadow, Shadow, all the late voices urge thee
Leave thy vigil now for a noon of slumber,
Surely mayst thou shut from thy mothering
eyelids

Griefs without number!

Where the covering darkness lifts from the
housetops,
Baring stark those wretched beyond their tell-
ing, —

Count not thou their wants and their wounds! —
nay, go not
Forth of thy dwelling.

What wilt thou see? — The thousand shames
and hungers;
Old despairs, clinging thy thousand pities!
What wilt thou hear? — Save who must faint
and famish,
Through all thy cities?

The morning-stars

Were laughing all.

The Shadow heard them call.

The darkness called her by her name.

The Shadow rose and came.

*There were the early stars astir,
 And one and all they laughed at her.
 O sisterwise they sung to her;
 Old songs, old words they flung to her,
 She knew again, again :
 The olden laughter of a star,
 From long ago, and far and far !
 But all their music and their mirth
 Fell, as the little words of earth,
 Unto an old refrain : —
 Silver laughter and golden scorn,
 Across the soothsay of gray morn,
 With the smiting of sweet rain.*

VI

‘Spin—spin! Thou who wert made for spinning!

We are but stars that fade. Thou, thou art human.

Thou, the spinner, — yea, from the far beginning,

Made to be Woman.

‘Come, come forth, — unto the uttermost borders;

276 H A R V E S T M O O N

Forth, where the old despairs and shames implore thee,
Forth of thy small shut house,—where thy dominions
 Widen before thee.

‘Spin, — spin! Lift up thy radiant distaff:
Spinner thou art, — yea, from the dim beginning,
Life and the web of all life, and the hosts and
 their glory; —
 Thine was the spinning!

‘Spin, — spin! while that the Three were spinning,
Thou behind them gavest their flax, O Mother;
Thou, the spinner and spun, and the thread that
 was severed; —
 Thou, not another.

‘Spin, — spin! Lift up thy heart with thy spinning;
Look and behold it, shading thine eyes from
 our laughter; —
Life and the glory of Life and the hosts of the living,
 Here and hereafter!

‘Fear not, fail not! Let not thy lowliness draw
thee

Back to thy small shut house, O thou too
lowly!

Here, in thy shrining hands the web of thy
glory,

Blinding and holy.

‘Never thine own; not for thy poor posses-
sion, —

Locked in darkness, spent with a dim en-
deavor; —

Life and the web of All Life, and the hosts
of the living,

Now and forever.

‘Rise, come with the sun to the chorusing
vineyards!

We are but stars, that fade. And thou art
human.

Put on thy beautiful garments, O thou Belovèd,
Thou who art Woman.

‘Rise, come! Blow out thy tremulous rush-
light;

Come, where the golden tides give cry of warning.

278 H A R V E S T M O O N

Over the dark, flooding the world with wonder,
Flows the first morning!

‘Rise, come! Known at last of the nations;—
Even of this dim world thou hadst in thy keep-
ing. —

Thou sole sentinel over the dark of the ages! —
Love, the unsleeping.’

BALLAD OF THE BOW-STRING

HUNTER,— Hunter, with the moon-
shaped Bow,
Is it man you wait to slay? Or the
thirsting doe?’

‘ Woman,— strange one, early at the spring,
What is here for your great eyes, in a daily
thing?’

‘ Hunter,— ah, I know!

‘ Morning-dream awoke me, and winged me on
my way;

Morning-dream laid on me a hidden thing to
say :

When I saw thee bend here the great moon-
shapen bow,

And twice and thrice thy fingers plucked the
sinew so,

For its yea or nay!

‘ Taut it was.— It trembled as a netted bird,
Wild for flight, and shuddering through feathers
bright and blurred.

Wild the air fled from it, that spread in echoing
rings,

Till it woke a star far-off, — it woke my heart
to wings,

Hunter, when I heard,
— With its singing Word!

‘Then it was, the Sun strode singing from his
lair,

And bound my sandals on me, and grasped me
by my hair,

And sped me forth to meet thee, lord of them
that prey,

— Sped me forth to meet thee, with one word
to say.

Shall we be no wiser now, than with stone and
sling?

Is this too for blood-shed? — This, the moon-
shaped thing?

And the god within it? — Wilt thou slay or sing?
— Wilt thou slay or sing?

‘Thou lookest on the creatures, from a high
noonday,

With this wonder in thy hand, for thy heart’s
soothsay :

And the hour calls out on thee:

Shall it sing, or slay?

Shall it sing, or slay?'

'Woman, wandering woman, — and sudden as
a fawn,

What is this moon-madness, by the wells of
dawn?

You would bind me with your eyes, that hold
me listening:

Trick and bind my heart of wrath that has made
me king: —

Shall it slay, or sing!' —

'Hunter, never arrow spake as that singing word.
Wounded with the joy of it, all my longings
stirred, —

Stirred and woke, and woke my heart; as a
rescue call

So might burst a captive's bond, to hear his
wherewithal!

Even so, the seeking ships, outstripped by a
bird,

Strain their thews and struggle on, — to sagas
sudden heard,

Of their whitherward!'

‘Woman, weaving mazes of all beyond thy
ken,

When the bright wide earth is mine, with all
its fighting men,

— Shall be singing then !

Mad one, come to stay me here, — riddling
for delay,

Of my weapon that is mine, for my yea and
nay,

Would you rather hear it sing, then, than see
it slay ?

— Turn your eyes away.’

‘Hunter, for the thousand years, do as thou
hast done !

Till the red drops flow, flow down, from the
blinded Sun ;

Till the withered lights drop down, spent, for
thee and me,

And the bright things meet the dark, darkened
utterly ;

Drowned beneath the weeping Dark, under-
neath the sea ;

In the deep on deep of all : —

. . . Tears, tears, maybe.

HUNTER'S MOON 283

'Sun-mad thou with noonday, and thy red
pulse in thee.

Moon-mad I, with anguish of a wonder not to
be!'

— 'What is that to thee?' —

'Hunter, was it nothing? Once to hold in
thrall,

With thy hands, the tortured god, that might
shew thee all? —

For the moment that it sang, — shuddering
for the light,

All my soul was cloven through, pierced with
spears of sight.

'And I saw and heard it. And I saw us twain,
Bright with our own wakened eyes, by this
spring again.

And the golden echoes, flocking, sea-bird wise,
Widening to the sea-rim, — fled with golden
cries;

Sounding forth a glory, from the strand on
strand

Of thy master music, gathered in thy hand:
All the tongues of sooth-say, gathered and set
free,

284 H A R V E S T M O O N

All the tongues of sooth-say, — flame for thee
and me!

Till the winds crept closer, — the winds, to
understand, —

And the tides to hearken:

And the stars, to see!’

THE HUNTED

COME out of exile, come, come: the
harvest-fields grow gaunt.
The over-lord, he has gone his way.
Lordlier spoil is his to-day.
Beasts of burden and beasts of prey,
Why will you suffer want?

Free of the seas, go free, great-finned: though
the sea be filled with nets.
Free of the air;—for the watcher there, after
strange prey, forgets.

Choose your path as you will, lord ox; for
women follow the plough.
Take your fill, gray wolf, of the flocks. There
are no shepherds now.

They have made them gods out of iron and
blood; and they plough a smouldering
path.
Blind and blinded, they follow now, the eyeless
gods of wrath.

286 H A R V E S T M O O N

And the shepherding Man who held His heart
 for a light in His own two hands,
Houseless as you, an outcast too,—bleeding
 and spent He stands;

Bleeding afresh from open wounds, under the
 sky, alone;
To warn all souls that yet pass by, of the por-
 tion that Love shall own.

For the Hunter, bond to his bitter path, goaded
 and yoked, he plods
Under a scourge of knotted lies,—after the
 iron gods.

OUTCAST

DAY again. Is he breathing yet,
 Brother? — He hangs there still.
I crept close by, where the cross is
 set,
 Under the broken hill;
And down from his side, the drops ran wet
 Where the spears had done their will.

Who would have guessed that One the
 worst?

 Look you, how deep they lie;
Bodies of men, — bodies of men,
 Over the field hard by:
Only that one nailed up alive,
 For a warning; — slow to die.

Needs must he be a Man to dread.

 But how should he last the day?
With his heart torn wide, and beating red,
 Since the army marched away. —
What if we called him now, to know
 The thing he strove to say?

288 H A R V E S T M O O N

He was the Man of might, be sure,
That they chose this way accurst.
And he breathes : but says no word at all,
Since one I heard, the first :—
Low, but all we could understand ;
In our own tongue. — ‘ *I thirst.*’

SEA-THIRST

*Down to the Sea, — the Sea,
That waits to set men free!*

DOWN to the sea I came.
The sea was all one flame :
The sea, the thousand glories and the
same !

From every wave did run !
A thousand lights — and one,
With rainbow-shattered halos of the sun !

From every light that sprang,
A music rang
Back to the thronging tide, that surged and
sang.

The tides with rapturous lips,
Sang on, — sang on the ships :
The sun-path dipped, in star-sown far eclipse.

O veil of farness, donned,
And shed as any bond,
For veil on veil of beckoning beyond ; —

O Sea, that would outstrip
Slow dreams of fellowship,
Beckoning still, beyond the sails that dip!

Wings, wings, forbid it me,
My own should prison me
From that mirage of glimmering prophecy: —

The dearness dim-divined,
Of stranger-kind,
That far horizon calls me on, to find!

Lest I should wall me in
With my near kin; —
Lead on, — lead on, to where the stars begin.

O sea-path, and sea-fire
To light the far folk nigher,
And thirst, forever one with heart's desire!

Still sing me to the ken
Of singing, sailing men;
The nearing lights and eyes, — again, again!

With sagas of the foam,
That sing the good ships home
From east and west, to port of spire and dome.

With harbor-lights, that are
As word of star to star,—
The mother-tongue of light, from near to far!

All hail! . . .
Call of the sparkling trail
That bids my heart on, as a lifted sail!

The sail fulfilled of Breath:—
Triumphing sail, that saith,
'And whither now? And whither now,—
O Death?'

*Down to the Sea,—the Sea,
That waits to set men free!*

HARVEST MOON: 1916

MOON, slow rising, over the trembling
 sea-rim,
Moon of the lifted tides and their
folded burden,
Look, look down. And gather the blinded
oceans,
Moon of compassion.

Come, white Silence, over the one sea pathway:
Pour with hallowing hands on the surge and
 outcry,
Silver flame; and over the famished blackness,
Petals of moonlight.

Once again, the formless void of a world-wreck
Gropes its way through the echoing dark of
chaos;
Tide on tide, to the calling, lost horizons, —
One in the darkness.

You that veil the light of the all-beholding,
Shed white tidings down to the dooms of
longing,

Down to the timeless dark; and the sunken
treasures,
One in the darkness.

Touch, and harken, — under that shrouding
silver,
Rise and fall, the heart of the sea and its
legions,
All and one; one with the breath of the death-
less,
Rising and falling.

Touch and waken so, to a far hereafter,
Ebb and flow, the deep, and the dead in their
longing:
Till at last, on the hungering face of the waters,
There shall be Light.



Light of Light, give us to see, for their sake.
Light of Light, grant them eternal peace;
And let light perpetual shine upon them;
Light, everlasting.



OFFERING

TO you, poor offering of a lowly cup,
My heart, here lifted up.
To you, and to the undying starlight
shed
From your far-following hearts, O mothers
of the dead.
O lovers of the dead, who died alone
For Life's bright sake!
For men unborn and far-off stranger kin;
Storming the hells of hate, to climb and take
The morning heights unwon, —
Where Life shall have its own;
Where Love shall have its own;
And freemen of all breath shall gather in
The harvest of the Sun.

THE WAYFARERS

(Published in 1898)

*Deh peregrini, che pensosi andate
Forse di cosa che mon v'è presente,
Venite voi di sì lontana gente,
Come alla vista voi ne dimostrate?*

La Vita Nuova

THE WAYFARERS

I HELD my way along the years
With all that errant company.
The eyes of the untroubled spheres
Beheld us, cold with mystery:
We questioned each false guide of day
That lighted us upon the way,
And all our parley sunk like dew into the loud,
unanswering sea.

But even while we all despaired
In desert places no man knew,
We spake of her to whom we fared,
That she might read our darkness through:
‘Life, the Revealer, when we reach
Her mother knees, shall smile to teach
Her soul to us who name her now, as our poor
dreams would have us do.’

There were who journeyed swift at heart
And saw, with eyes unstung of tears,
The coiling sea that lurked apart,
The cold forgetfulness of spheres.

298 T H E W A Y F A R E R S

They hoarded not their hearts for gain,
But spent red joy and regal pain:
They wrought, from all their heritage, rich gifts
for the unheeding years.

For some had learned the lore of springs
To wake new life within the throng.
With call of pipe and throb of strings,
They pricked the darkness all along.
With viol breath they cooled the sun,
As doves, alighting one by one,
Bring purple solace to the noon, like a dim water
and its song.

And some were wise, with gracious hands
To shape us fair immortal things.
All the slow craft Time understands
They knew, save how to doom with wings
The creature clay, that answered naught.
Alas, poor gods! For all they wrought
White oracles, yet none gave ear or answer to our
questionings.

All these kept songful company,
With brother looks, in diverse tongue;
I wot that manna might not be
A largess sweeter to the throng.

Their speech was such a shadow as
 Takes pity on the parching grass.
 They would have cheered us, saying, 'Life shall
 tell you that her name is Song.'

There were who walked apart from these,
 With eyes upon the way beneath;
 They questioned not the wilderness,
 Nor gladdened it with eager breath.
 The one poor path they bent to see
 Crept through the sand-dunes sullenly;
 They girt their hearts up unto pain and said,
 'Her one true name is Death.'

Some journeyed glad as men that fare
 Through dreams; and of their dream they wove
 A loneliness of light to wear
 (Like those far-travellers above):
 And bright outlooking, wrapt in this,
 They saw no kindred chrysalis
 Pent in dull patience, but they sang, 'Life
 knoweth that her name is Love.'

But myriads were there more than these,
 Like rain, unnumbered and half-heard;
 They murmured at the wilderness —
 Poor rain, whose sorrow hath no word! —

300 T H E W A Y F A R E R S

Or plied the lowly tasks they found,
As unseen creatures of the ground, —
The thousand-fold dim voice of noon that is but
silence, to the bird.

Oh, years alone have songful lips
To tell you how we wandered on,
As far as all the sunken ships
That stirred a ripple, long ago.
And whether I took path away
Or wandered thence for blind dismay,
I know not, but a dusk came down and thrust
me onward all alone.

The wistful even, like a moth,
Yearned upward to the only light;
And as a crafty taper doth
The moon did beckon, blithe and white.
The dusk reached blindly as a prayer
Unto the goodly promise there,
And withered: down, with blackened wings, the
shadows swarmed into the night.

There was no path to point the way
Where Life abode; no mark was set.
The fields were weary of the day
And seemed to muse and to forget.

The shadows beckoned all in turn,
 But when I followed them, to learn,
 They shook dull locks, and all the night fell
 round about me like a net.

And there the torpid marsh lay prone
 Its dappled length, in mockery;
 And there the sea kept watch alone,
 A live, bright coil that hissed at me.
 Not to the stars I looked for ruth:
 Like vestals high and far, in sooth,
 With silver looks of laughter all, they leaned from
 out the dark to see.

The branches heard their far-off mirth
 And swayed with laughter to and fro:
 The servile shadows on the earth
 Made sudden mimicry below.
 The gray winds waited everywhere
 To peer and lurk, and in despair
 Go by — go by with aged cries of all the grief
 the world doth know.

And when at last no bitter strait
 Could bring me any wonderment,
 They left the thousand ways of hate,
 And all the grievous phantoms went

As a dark dream of long ago.
 I saw the simple stars burn low,
 Like tapers, held of weary folk that slumber
 when their watch is spent.

A red, red rose, the early sun
 Came up, as glad as any guest;
 A white, white rose whose bloom was done,
 The moon did wane unto the west.
 The waking fields breathed warm and
 stirred
 Small presences of song, half heard;
 The wan stars closed against the day like
 flowers that fold them for their rest.

And suddenly the way was clear
 As any song for them that hark;
 And One sat, like the singer, there
 Where every wayfarer must mark.
 A moment all my soul stood dumb;
 And then, because the time was come,
 I knew her, by her eyes that held one perfect
 day, from dawn to dark.

She sat where all the high-roads meet
 And all the striving ways are one.

The dumb sea crept unto her feet
 With lowered mane, his wrath undone.
 The voice of all the worlds astir
 Sunk to the past at sight of her.
 There was naught left but her blind eyes that
 gazed into the climbing sun.

Surely no least created thing
 Was mean, to her, that came her way;
 She turned her from the worshipping
 Of prostrate earth, of seas that pray.
 She turned her living eyes on me —
 Well knew I then she might not see,
 And yet their wide-enfolding look was all about
 me, like the day.

She spake: 'I am that One ye sought
 Through years that fade, through ways that
 wind.

I am that One for whom ye wrought
 The lovely names ye thought to find:
*'Life, the Revealer, when we reach
 Her mother knees, shall smile to teach
 Her soul to us.'* And would I not, if I but knew!
 But I am blind.

'Yet by the stranger gifts ye bring,
 And by your alien prayers that throng,
 I know I am not that ye sing,
 The little dream that does me wrong.
 Ye pray me that I shew you what
 My one name is: I know it not;
 Only I know I am not Death, I am not Love, I
 am not Song.

'The nations come to me from far
 That love me by a name alone;
 And the dream fails them, and they are
 Stricken with famine, dream-undone.
 Ever my heart cried out to bless,
 To shelter all their loneliness;
 They dreamed, awakened, went their ways, —
 oh, years and lonely years ago!

'They dream I sit on high, afar,
 A light to pierce all mystery;
 Untroubled as a fixèd star
 That heeds no sorrow of the sea.
 Yet stars make patient pilgrimage
 Across the dark, from age to age;
 And who would know me that I am, must take
 my hand and go with me.'

Oh, if I thought to answer nay,
 Her dear eyes did not understand;
 Wayfarers two, we went our way
 From hour to day, across the land!
 Her blindness hid the dark from her;
 She led me, leal through joy and fear;
 From little day to little day she led me child-like,
 hand in hand.

And like the sweet of rain, upheld
 All tremulous in rose half curled,
 The brimming song of things out-welled
 Promise of morrows still unfurled.
 Ever the wind before us sped
 Some mystery, interpreted,
 And lifted faces of the hills did beckon us across
 the world.

Oh, step by step, the troubled wood
 Spake all its shadow clear to us;
 And, hand in hand, the lowlihood
 Of wayside weeds grew dear to us.
 The shy trees leaned to us, abloom,
 A nest called soft from leafy gloom,
 And all the hidden heart of things beat sudden,
 warm, and near to us.

306 THE WAYFARERS

And day by day, grown deep apace,
The song welled over to our need,
And all that mystic heart of grace
Enfolded us as kin indeed.
The simple-spoken weeds, that sing
So wisely, taught us everything
Full soft, as agèd stars may sing low to the child-
hood of the weed.

Sometimes there hovers down to her,
Portent of what her name may be,
Like any humming-bird, a blur
Of music and of glamourie —
Awing, away! Sometimes she seems
Houseless, and poor of all but dreams,
Save that her looks are crowned with all the
patience of a sovereignty.

Sometimes a passing cloud may keep
The secret white and unrevealed;
Sometimes it haunts the wavering sleep
Of a forgetful summer field.
Sometimes the lordly winds are bold
To sing of godhead lost of old:
And I would think her Builder of the world, save
that her eyes are sealed.

I know not if the years be years,
As, great and small, we journey on,
Nor if the service of the spheres
And of the friendly weeds be one. . . .
Like singing harvesters, that fare
Weary and glad, we go where'er
She leads the way, with strong, blind eyes,
that dare to gaze into the sun.

THE SHEPHERD-GIRL

WITHIN the twilight on the hill,
A shepherd-girl I met;
And she was weeping as she went,
Nor may I well forget
The darksome eyes she lifted up,
That bitter tears had wet.

‘My sheep are all astray, astray;
And since the sun arose,
I have been searching all the land
Beyond the meadow-close;
And all my sheep are gone from me,
And none are left to lose.

‘We wandered, all the summer days,
Where any cowslip led.
The little brook came with us, too,
But now the leaves are dead;
The winds blow chill from yonder hill,
And it is dark,’ she said.

‘Oh, all the summer days I piped
An answer to the lark.

My lambs were growing white as stars,
And fair for all to mark;
And they have left me, one by one,'
She said, 'and it is dark.'

'Nay, come, thou lonely shepherd-girl,
And find thy sheep with me!
The yellow moon will rise full soon,
And lend her light for thee.
But thou art weary, wandering;
Thine eyes are strange to see.'

'Lad, I have called them long and long;
Only an echo hears.
The grass blows gray beneath the wind —
As gray as far-off years;
And even if the moonlight shone
I could not see, for tears.'

CARAVANS

WHAT bring ye me, O camels, across the
southern desert,

The wan and parching desert, pale
beneath the dusk?

Ye great slow-moving ones, faithful as care is
faithful,

Uncouth as dreams may be, sluggish as far-off
ships, —

What bring ye me, O camels?

‘Gold, — gold like sunshine, saving that it warms
not;

And rarest purple bring we, as dark as all the
garnered

Bloom of many grape-vines; and spices subtly
mingled

For a lasting savor: the precious nard and aloes;
The bitter sweet of myrrh, like a sorrow having
wings;

Ghostly breath of lilies bruised — how white
they were! —

And the captive life of many a far rose-garden.
Jewels bring we hither, surely stars once fallen,

Torn again from darkness: the sunlit frost of
topaz,

Moon-fire pent in opals, pearls that even the sea
loves.

· Webs of marvel bring we, broideries that have
drunken

Deep of all life-color from a thousand lives, —
Each the royal cere-cloth of a century.

Speak, what wouldst thou more?’

All this dust, these ashes, have ye brought so far?
All these days, these years, have I waited in the
sun?

I would have had the wingèd Mirage beyond the
desert.

ISOLATION

O BROTHER Planets, unto whom I
cry,
Know ye, in all the worlds, a gladder
thing

Than this glad life of ours, this wandering
Among the eternal winds that wander by?

Ever to fly, with white star-faces set
Quenchless against the darkness, and the
wet

Pinions of all the storms, — on, on alone,
With radiant locks outblown,
And sun-strong eyes to see
Into the sunless maze of all futurity!

Not ours the little measure of the years,
The bitter-sweet of summer that soon wanes,
The briefer benison of springtime rains;
Nay, but the thirst of all the living spheres,
Full-fed with mighty draughts of dark and
light, —

The soul of all the dawns, the love of night,
The strength of deathless winters, and the boon
Of endless summer noon.

Look down, from star to star,
And see the centuries — a flock of birds,
afar.

Afar! But we, each one God's sentinel,
Lifting on high the torches that are His,
Look forth to one another o'er the abyss,
And cry, *Eternity, — and all is well!*
So ever journey we, and only know
The way is His, and unto Him we go.
Through all the voiceless desert of the air,
Through all the star-dust there,
Where none has ever gone,
Still singing, seeking still, we wander on
and on.

O brother Planets, ye to whom I cry,
Yet hath a strange dream touched me; for a
cloud
Flared like a moth, within mine eyes. I
bowed
My head, and, looking down through all the
sky,
I saw the little Earth, far down below, —
The Earth that all the wandering winds do
know.

314 THE WAYFARERS

Like some ground-bird, the small, belovèd one
Fluttered about the sun.

Ah, were that little star

Only a signal-light of love for us, afar!

THE WOMAN OF THREE SORROWS

YE would have wondered, had ye felt
Her eyes upon your eyes, the while;
Ye would have wondered, had ye seen
All the wan glory of her smile.

No wonderment was in her eyes,
No bitterness was there, awake,
Only a dark of mystery;
And thus the Woman spake:

‘Yea, it was dark, all dark: no light
Even from sunset; near or far
Glimmered no dawn, nor was there yet
The distant pity of a star.

‘Yea, it was cold: no passing wind
Hurried the chill mist to and fro;
Blank coldness without sound or stir
Or any whispering snow.

‘Yea, it was still: no voice of pain
Did break the stillness without breath,

Dumb as the silence twixt the worlds. —
The great mid-silence we name Death.

‘Nay, but what say I? ’ Now, the lights
As crosses through my tears I see,
Yet know I they are lights no less:
How should ye pity me?

‘My sorrow was the lack of one
My life lacks yet, in whose dear stead
The Heart of all the earth is mine,
And mine, mine too, are all its dead.

‘My sorrow was a starving mind
That craved the message of the years:
Now, like a child, I hear, far-off,
The singing of the spheres.

‘My sorrow was, I had not one
Of all the world-gifts that may bless:
I go my way, — within my hands,
Only a glorious emptiness.’

The Woman held her sorrows up,
High up within God’s sight, and said:
‘Lo, for Thy gifts, I give Thee thanks!’
And smiled, as smile the dead.

SPINNING IN APRIL

MOON in heaven's garden, among the
clouds that wander,
Crescent moon so young to see, above
the April ways,
Whiten, bloom not yet, not yet, within the
twilight yonder;
All my spinning is not done, for all the loitering
days.

Oh, my heart has two wild wings that ever would
be flying!

Oh, my heart's a meadow-lark that ever would be
free!

Well it is that I must spin until the light be
dying;

Well it is the little wheel must turn all day for
me!

All the hill-tops beckon, and beyond the western
meadows

Something calls me ever, calls me ever, low and
clear:

318 THE WAYFARERS

A little tree as young as I, the coming summer
shadows, —

The voice of running waters that I ever thirst
to hear.

Oftentime the plea of it has set my wings a-
beating;

Oftentimes it coaxes, as I sit in weary wise,
Till the wild life hastens out to wild things all
entreating,

And leaves me at the spinning-wheel, with dark,
unseeing eyes.

Sing the while I spin, my wheel, my loyal one,
a-hover

Like a circling humming-bird that's loath to
leave a rose;

Sing and keep my heart at home, one song,
again and over,

Like a summer brook that ever passes, never
goes.

Sing, my wheel. To wearied eyes, the flax
within my fingers

Is a white and shining cloud, a nest to hold the
rain.

SPINNING IN APRIL 319

Lo! the earth is mine to bless, and not a rain-
drop lingers:

Wings for all the hastening shower that greets
the world again!

Laugh, my wheel. The rain is past; the rain-
bow follows after.

All the sparrows flutter down like brown leaves
from the year.

Glad with rain, the river hastens on, a-glint
with laughter, —

Laughter of running waters that I ever thirst to
hear.

Sing and turn again, my wheel; the afterglow is
dimmer.

Sing and keep my heart at home. Thy little
quiet croon

Is like the soft and far-off voice of twilight fields
a-glimmer,

Like musing waters wandering beneath the
harvest moon.

Hum, my wheel, like any bee close folded in a
flower,

Half a happy captive thing, yet tremulous for
flight.

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Slow, my wheel, sing low, my wheel, my bee
within a bower;
Shadow petals fold thee in; thou shalt not flit
to-night.

Ay, for thee, my spinning-wheel! And hast
thou wings a-flutter?
Unseen wings that beat to leave the spinning
all undone? —
Leave the lowly day for all the songs thou hast
to utter,
Born of the dumb heart of things that strive to
find the sun?

Slow, and slow, and hush, my wheel; and still
thy wingless sorrow.
There may come, as guest to us, some great,
benignant Day
To greet us at the spinning here and give us this
good-morrow:
'Break, thou little cage of her, and wing the bird
away!'

HORIZON

MAKER of songs, what weariness
Upon thy sleepless eyelid weighs?
Maker of songs, what silence lays
Cold hand upon thy lips that bless?

The fallen leaves about thy feet
Are mute beneath the questioning
Of air that finds no song to greet.
Why dost thou listen and not sing?

We cannot see the dreams that rise
Before those darkened eyes of thine;
We cannot hear the voice that cries
Unto thy silence, all divine.
There weighs upon our eagerness,
Our straining eyes that fain would see, —
Thoughts, wingless, that would follow thee,
Maker of songs, what weariness!

'Face to face with my soul there stands
A Song — nor may I call her name,
Nor know from what far place she came;
I may not take her by the hands.
Not wholly wrought, she faces me,

But like an image incomplete,
And ever smiles, inscrutably,
A smile whose mystery is sweet.
The slow, wan smile that curves her lips
Might brood upon the face of one
Standing forever in the sun,
A watcher of the unseen ships.

‘(O lightless eyes whose light I wait,
Dim smile that tells of listening,
On what far, perfect day shall fate
Breathe through thy soul and bid thee
sing?)
I wait the nearing mystery;
Ye look to me, nor understand.
For eyes unborn an alien land, —
So Life looks out, to Death, the Sea.’

THE FISHERS

YEA, we have toiled all night. All night
We kept the boats, we cast the nets.
Nothing avails: the tides withhold,
The Sea hears not, and God forgets.

Long ere the sunset, we took leave
Of them at home whom want doth keep;
Now bitterness be all their bread
And tears their drink, and death their sleep!

The gaunt moon stayed to look on us
And marvel we abode so still,
Again we cast, again we drew
The nets that nought but hope did fill.

And while the grasp of near Despair
Did threaten nearer with the day,
Leagues out, the bounteous silver-sides
Leaped through the sheltering waves, at
play!

So, stricken with the cold that smites
Death to a dying heart at morn,

324 THE WAYFARERS

We waited, thralls to hunger, such
As the strong stars may laugh to scorn.

And while we strove, leagues out, afar,
Returning tides, — with mighty hands
Full of the silver! — passed us by
To cast it upon alien lands.

Against the surge of hope we stood
And the waves laughed with victory;
Yet at our heart-strings, with the nets,
Tugged the false promise of the Sea.

So all the night-time we kept watch;
And when the years of night were done,
Aflame with hunger, stared on us
The fixed red eye of yonder sun.

Thou Wanderer from land to land,
Say who Thou art to bid us strive
Once more against the eternal Sea
That loves to take strong men alive.

Lo, we stood fast, and we endure:
But trust not Thou the Sea we know,
Mighty of bounty and of hate,
Slayer and friend, with ebb and flow.

Thou hast not measured strength as we
Sea-faring men that toil . . . And yet —
Once more, once more — at Thy strange word,
Master, we will let down the net!

CANONIZED

THERE by the wayside, so she ever
stood,
Shadowed and small, unwitting of the
sky,
Nought but a little lorn beatitude
To pray to and pass by.

So young she was, not all the grievous rain
That wept to her had ever taught her tears;
Yet no May morning kindled blue again
Her wide eyes, dulled with years.

So cold she was with vigil — the one care
To be a steadfast saint, she did not know
Vines called to her; her hands held unaware
The mocking gift of snow.

Life was not life to her: she dimly saw
Dim flocks gone by, and herdsmen weary-
dull,
And loitering children, to whose brimming awe
She seemed all-beautiful.

Time was not time to her: she heard, content,
The hour, like one more prayer-bead, slipped
along
A rosary of vigil never spent,
Matins and even-song.

Was it because she knew not how to stir
An empty hand, and beckon gladness come, —
The wingèd secret spread its wings to her
And took her heart for home?

For close as silence, rounded as a song,
Built sure within the quiet of her breast, —
Shy sanctuary, all the year has clung
A brown deserted nest.

Surely she woke to find the world at spring,
And all her sainthood quickened with the
rime;
Surely there came to her on rain-soft wing,
Love, for a summer-time.

Query, and heart-beat, and the eager stress
Of sunward wings made wise her solitude;
Love, and the warm content of littleness
With her maid-motherhood.

328 T H E W A Y F A R E R S

Since when she stands as patiently adream
 With empty hands outheld, that make no
 stir, —
All in a long last-year: it well may seem
 Time is not time to her.

And yet she knows the plea of vines that call,
 The weariness of folk that pass, with eyes
Outlooking on the burden of them all,
 Awakened, warm, and wise.

O wind of summer, blow her songs of thine;
 O winds of winter, look ye spare alone
One nest, not now too lordly for a shrine,
 — Since all the birds are flown.

THE WEAVERS

*ALL day I walk among the crowd,
Seeking the Weavers. Well I wot
This noonday, staring blank and hot,
Is not for them; yet in a cloud
Of men I wander — call aloud.
All day I seek, and find them not.*

Lo, every night the Weavers come,
And one by one, and silently,
With eyes down-looking timidly,
They steal into the darkening room,
Bent forms and eld against the gloom,
With faces gray as mystery.

Dim faces have the Weavers, — eyes
Of patience that do seem to shun
The waning light, as one by one
They come what way the shadow lies,
Like long imprisoned memories
That dare not look upon the sun.

With flickering smiles of gentleness,
Finger on lip, they come: and soon

Beneath the shuttle's lowly croon
The silence groweth less and less,
As dusk before the loveliness
Of a slow-rising summer moon.

The shuttle hummeth. Hovering
Across the threads, as dark to see
As falling rain at dusk may be,
It poiseth like a wingèd thing
Upon the web; its murmuring
Is silence wrapt in melody.

The shuttle hummeth. A slant gleam
Of moonlight wavereth along
The faces of the Weaver throng,
Their uncouth shapes: else would ye deem
They were not there, — so doth there seem
Nought save the shuttle's growing song.

Lo, a gray pallor on the loom
Waxeth apace, — a glamourie
Like dawn outlooking, pale to see,
Before the sun hath burst to bloom;
Wan beauty, growing out of gloom,
With promise of fair things to be.

The shuttle singeth. And a mist
Of rainbow hangeth there anon,
Passing away ere it hath shone,
To leave a bloom of amethyst,
Quick fading, too: ye had not wist
Ye saw it clear, ere it was gone.

The shuttle singeth. And fair things
Upon the web do come and go;
Dim tracteries like clouds ablow
Fade into cobweb glimmerings,
A silver, fretted with small wings, —
The while a voice is singing low.

It warmeth into living gold
As cowslips open in the sun;
It burneth bright, and one by one
Across the sea-rim, ships of old
Pass by, pass by, like stars in fold.
(Who singeth ere the web be done?)

The ships they sail through moon and star,
Across the shimmering weft of sea.
The iris-wingèd argosy,
Unharbored of all ports that are,

Sinketh into the sun, afar,
As in the cowslip doth the bee.

The quiet yieldeth up its sweet
To a great laughter; winds arise;
Wild birds awaken alien skies,
And in a tremulous outer heat
The pulses of the summer beat
To the deep hum of dragon-flies.

Light cometh yet, and changing hues
Of promise; and the burning thread,
Like restless opal, fain would wed
The creeping smoke of filmy blues.
One ruddy spark, alight, doth fuse
All color in a dawn of red.

(Who singeth?) Oh, thou rose of flame,
Like a face smiling as to bless,
Out-burning from a shadow tress
Of dark, — a glory without name:
It bloweth swiftly as it came,
Rose of immortal happiness!

‘Lo, the Life-glory, it hath come!’
Ah, Soul, who laughed aloud at thee?

Nay, not the Weavers. Mystery!
 Was it a shuttle, broken, dumb?
 Nought is there, nought in all the room
 Save daylight and its vacancy.

*Last night the Weavers came and went.
 Ay me, so fair a web was wrought,
 All wingèd hopes within it caught!
 And ere the colors were forspent
 The blank day snatched the joy they lent,
 Day, staring like a thing distraught.*

*I seek the Weavers. As I go,
 All faces save their own I see,
 But not their gentle company, —
 Never their smiles that flicker so.
 Theirs are the only eyes I know;
 All other folk are strange to me.*

ONE PASSES IN THE DARK

THE white stars, one by one,
Lean out of their casement high;
And the lily-cup is folded up,
And the moon-clouds wander by.
Come hither, ye little wildwood things,
Unto the call the night-wind sings
Over the brooding sky.
Ours is the noon
Of the fairer moon, —
And a voice in the dark am I.

Morning will come to greet
A little new rose, I wis;
But the loving air that heard it ope
Hath welcomed it with a kiss.
And the clouds with the white up-gathering
hands,
Bringing the rain from far-off lands,
They sing as they wander by:
All are awake
For singing's sake; —
A voice in the dark am I.

What shall ye hear by day?

The tread of a thousand feet.

Come but here when the night is near

And listen, and find it sweet.

The voice of the things ye dream are dumb:

The murmur of living, the waters' hum,

And the growing of the grass!

Voices of all,

In the night they call:

A voice am I that pass.

The tremor of moths that flit,

The laughter of leaves that blow,

And the hurtling wings of a wind that sings,

And the bending of grass below;

The little white voice of a flower unborn

That shall not blossom for many a morn;

Yet it grows all steadfastly;

Under the night,

It feels the light

Of stars in an unseen sky.

The little hastening hare

Listens, with anxious ear,

To know if the Day be on her way,

Day that must never hear.

336 THE WAYFARERS

Chameleons shy, and the hidden bird,
The silver lizards, all these be heard
 In their strange and wilding speech.
 If ye but hark,
 They sing at dark,
 To the night that loves them, each.

Who passes beneath? Who sings?
 A voice that may live or die.
Let the only thing ye know of me
 Be the song that wanders by.
Come hither, ye little living things;
Sing with me now as each star sings,
 Each star in the beckoning sky;
 For the day must come
 And we be dumb, —
 And a voice in the dark am I.

DREAMS

THE little Singer sitteth by the gate
Beneath the sun,' they said,
 'With closed eyes, as one sits desolate:
And round about her head,
The birds all flutter wonderingly and wait,
 Wait for their daily bread.

'What dark hath come to shadow with its gray
Her morning-sky? What drouth
Hath seized upon the blossoms in her way?
Why is her singing mouth
Dumb as the woods are dumb, a winter day, —
 The birds flown to the south?

'God's Child the little Singer is; and why
Sitteth she here alone? —
The sunshine beating white from yonder sky,
The dawn to noonday grown,
The songless people passing songless by, —
 The birds all hither flown?'

Her weary eyelids fluttered, flower-wise;
She raised her listless head

338 THE WAYFARERS

And looked upon them all with darkened eyes
And slowly spoke, and said,
Clear, through the scattered sweetness of bird-
cries,
‘One of my birds is dead.’

And there was flitting, all about her face,
Of restless beating wings;
And hungry sparrows clamoured her for grace
With mellow questionings.
She spoke again, after a little space,
And spoke through flutterings.

‘One of my birds hath died,’ she said, ‘and ye
Who have not seen my bird,
How should ye know how fleet his wings could
be,
Or what new visions stirred
And wakened at his summer melody, —
Ye who have never heard?

‘Oh, he had reached the sun in one long flight,
Had he but lived to fly!
Have I not seen him overtake the night
In yonder smiling sky?

Did not my thoughts go with him to the light,
My wingèd thoughts and I?

‘God’s Child am I, — and what to me the years?’

The little Singer said,

‘Safe in my littleness, from any fears,

Because my steps are led, —

God’s Child and happy, singing through my
tears;

But this my bird is dead.

‘Cold wings and songless throat; nay then, look
ye!’

She said to them, and seemed

To reach soft-hollowed hands, for all to see,

But empty, as they deemed.

And each to each they murmured wonderingly,

‘The little Singer dreamed.’

‘A dream, ye say? But how is it ye tell

A dream from life?’ she said.

‘Name it a dream, this sorrow that befell,

A dream or life instead;

But once the bird was mine, I know full well:

And now my bird is dead.’

340 THE WAYFARERS

She bent her head beneath the noonday glare
In silence, weary-wise.

The birds, like snowflakes lighting unaware,
Sang clamorous replies;

Among them all, the little Singer there
Sat silent, with closed eyes.

ONE THAT FOLLOWED

I LIFT my heart up in the sun
To show Thee all its song, —
A morning nest of birds for Thee
To whom the birds belong;
I lift it up, I bid it sing
Against the winds that throng.

It needs must be a little gift;
And yet, since we are free,
Earth-children with the lordly winds
That bear us company,
Right fain we are, with nought but this,
To follow after Thee.

What later offering of myrrh
It may be mine to bring,
I know not yet, I would not know, —
Pain is so gray a thing;
And sure the dying day may leave
No heart in me to sing!

I know not yet how soon, how long
It may be mine to fight;

What standard won with blood I may
 Lift high before Thy sight;
 I bring Thee but the sunlit sword
 I may grasp, blind, to-night.

Knowing Thee Lord of gladnesses
 That spring in April wise,
 Who lovest all the eager things
 In wood and sea and skies,
 I shake the tears from off my heart,
 And the rain from out mine eyes.

But never be it said of me,
 I loitered by the way; —
 Spent all the glad light wandering
 As any sea-gull may,
 And fled to Thee for shelter, late,
 With the disheartened day.

Lord Christ, Lord Love, we bring to Thee
 Our joy at earliest,
 The joy of the unknowing day
 That looks unto the west.
 Now who will bear us company
 Upon the morning quest?

A WATER-CARRIER

(He speaks)

WOULD they bring hither all their thirst
to me,
If they but knew, I wonder. . . . There
the path

Lurks unsuspected, like a trodden thing
Subtle with pain, some lizard, dusty dim,
That creeps a weary way beneath the noon
And turns unto the desert, very sure
That none will follow.

Oh, my wilderness
Without a promise, save for who must find
A sweetness in the sand! Where nothing grows
But light too far to gather, — in the east
One early rose, and in the west one rose;
Dank shadows thick as weeds, and oftentime
Petals of cloud soft shed from fields of heaven.
Stern garden of no promise! Yet I found,
Long since, the hidden spring that none doth
know
Save I who hollowed out the eager sand,
Rushing to drink, and ringed the place with
stone.

There the cool boon wells up from starless
dark,

(Song-sparkle struck like fire from speechless
flint!)

Forever answering, with tranquil look,
The tranquil look of skies like summer sea,
Where nothing but a slow bird, half a-dream,
Ripples the silence. [There, sole creature joy,
Leaning her dear locks over, to look down
Upon the well, — eternal newcomer
Soft-singing to the heart of loneliness, —
The one Palm muses.

(He sings)

Yea, I call

Unto you, ye people all,
Unto you, ye passers-by!

Come and try

What sweet things the water saith
Of a pool where wandereth
Star or shadow, drifting by.
Softer than a ringdove's coo
It shall bubble forth for you;
Brighter than the ringdove's neck,
When he flutters, at the beck
Of the sunshine after rain,

Down unto the pool and dips.
 Answer for your thirsty lips,
 Sudden wings for pain,
 Bounty that is fain to bless,
 Shadow for your weariness
 That no eve may bring again!
 Drink, if ye would know the laughter
 Of the brown earth, after
 Rain!

I have been heedful of the boon, be sure, —
 Walking in fear lest my way-weariness
 Should quench the tremulous laughter that I
 bring;

Guarding it jealously from dust and drought
 And covetous thirst of noontide. Yea, some-
 times

When the jars weighed like heaven, too great
 and hot

Resting upon my head, too many stars
 To poise so high above a parching world,
 I have shut close my heart lest there should
 steal

Some bitter fragrance from heart's bitterness,
 Such as the weeds may loosen at nightfall,
 Wearied. . . . But still the clay holds fast its
 sweet,

Like silence; and ye know not, for ye come
 And ask the water, and ye drink of it,
 And take strange coolness of it, — a glad
 thing!

Sometimes I think I pour my very joy
 Out with the draught, since gladness follows
 it

As sea-bird after sail; and there is left
 The empty heart, like any earthen jar,
 It is so heavy. . . .

 Yea, I call
 Unto you, ye people all;
 Hearken, hearken, passers-by!
 Forth the eager water gushes,
 Like a wind among the rushes,
 Laughter set at liberty!

 Would ye know
 Whence it came to glisten so?
 Ask of all the stars that glisten,
 With the dark at ebb and flow.

 Listen, listen:
 All the coolness of a dream,
 All the mist of things that seem
 Only made to smile and go!
 Hearken what the water sings,
 Mindful of its wanderings

Ere it nested in the jars:
Lilies slow that came to pass,
Warm contentment of the grass
And the memory of stars.
Soothsay of the earth and skies
Treasured so to make you wise:
All the garnered sweet of things,
Wingèd so to give you wings,
Swift from out a caging sorrow
Towards the beckoning to-morrow,
— Wings!

PITY

*A*LONG the dawn the little star went singing,
Low-poised and clear to see,
Shaking the light, like drops of May-dew,
clinging
Her bright locks mistily.
Like any snowflake faded in the winging,
Her voice fell white to me.

‘O winds of Earth, that sorrow as ye fly
And take no rest,
Why go ye ever seeking, with that cry,
Some ruined nest?

‘Why weep, my world? Ah, strange and sad
thou art,
Thou far-off one,
The saddest wanderer that hath warmed her
heart
At yonder sun.

‘And I would give thee comfort, if I might,
That know not how;

Haply I see not far, for all the light
About my brow.

‘But who shall be thy sister, sorrowing?
Ah me! Not I,
That wander in a bond of joy and sing,
And know not why, —

‘Along the dawn, across unfathomed deep,
Unspent, unbowed,
Through shallows of the moonlight, thin as
sleep,
Through fields of cloud.

‘Poor world, thou agèd world, I only know
That I am led
A songful journey: art not thou? Nay, so,
Be comforted.’

*Along the dawn the little star went, winging
Glad ways across the wild,
Shaking the light that clung to her, enringing, —
An unremembering child.
Wide arms of morning gathered her, still singing:
And the Earth saw, and smiled.*

BIRD OF YESTERDAY

BIRD of yesterday,
Art thou flying south?
Wilt thou leave life's winter
For time's drouth?

Bird of yesterday,
In some eternal spring,
Wilt thou, like a song's ghost,
Stay, — and sing?

THE WATCHING OF PENELOPE

*'I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees.'*

Tennyson's 'Ulysses'

The Aged Penelope and a Handmaiden

AH me, day follows day, and Spring returns,
Never to bring my gladness with the
leaves.

Can she have lost her youth along with me?
Or are these barren rocks more loath to hail
Her coming than of old? Ah, child, ah, maid! —
I see Spring on thy forehead, and about
The young rose of thy mouth: so there is Spring
Still, sometimes. Lead me forth, Arsinoë.

So hath the Sea smiled on me, vacantly,
For centuries . . . nay, nay, for many days;
The aged speak thus. Yet, thou knowest well,
All thine own life-time I have looked on it,
Counting the years as sails that creep apace,
Always to sink; and the Sea grows not old.
Thy master tarries long away from me.
Yet men are ever so, girl, — stanch in war,

Faithful to chance, forever led away
 By some strange thirst of wandering; always
 fain

To waste their lives in seeking farther things,
 Until, the while a shadow beckons them,
 The true Life softly slips her fingers out
 From their loose clasp, and leaves them to a
 dream.

It is not so with my Telemachus:
 Wise ruler he, even in his father's stead,
 Ay, faithful son to me, and kingly man. . . .
 A man, in sooth! — no more a little lad
 To hearken here, with lifted eyes alight,
 To stories of his father's deeds in war;
 No more a youth. I am grown old indeed,
 Old, old; and haply he, thine absent King,
 Returning some far day, would know me not, —
 So hath long watching changed me, — but
 would say

To some one of my maidens, thee, perchance,
 'What wrinkled shade is this ye wait upon?'
 And hear thee say, 'The Queen, Penelope.'
 Yet hath thy master found eternal youth?
 So seemed it once, that ever-wondrous day!
 Ah, in what guise he came before me first,
 Infirm, brow-bent, led by the swineherd here;

A beggar, mark! And I, whose straining eyes
Had watched for twenty years, I knew him not.
Bethink thee, all those mornings, year on year,
How I had watched the cold eyes of the Sea
For any promise, — weaving the day fair
With thread of hope, an endless web to weave
And ravel into shreds again, with tears,
And weave once more. Once more the sun
would rise

Bright as a far-off sail, — nay, not so bright,
Until the Sea that hateth all, even me,
Stared mine eyes dim. And so I knew him not.

Bethink thee, maid: a sovereign's right is his,
The man's will ever his, to come and go
And wander whither hope may call afar,
For rumor of great deeds doth follow him
As the foam whitens in his good ship's wake.
Bethink thee, when thou weavest with the maids,
The man's it is to change the face o' the world;
The woman's part to listen and to wait.

Who is it stirreth on the hillside there?
(Would he but come again in any wise,
Or King or beggar, I should know him now.)
Were it a stranger, — hasten hither, girl, —

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He must have shelter for thy master's sake;
 Bid him come hither. No one, sayest thou?
 The shadow of a cloud: mine eyes are dim,
 But look abroad again, I saw a sail —
 A sail far out to sea there: dost not thou?
 Nay, strain thine eyes, far out. Yet in good
 sooth,

I know not whether it be far or near,
 I only saw the white in yonder blue.
 What sayest thou? A sea-bird, flying low?
 A sea-bird. . . . But look forth, Arsinoë,
 Look forth once more for me: thine eyes are
 young,
 The blue is endless. . . .

Dost thou see no sail?

DAPHNE LAUREA

‘Arbor eris certe . . . mea.’

WAS it not well, Apollo, for revenge
Of thine, my stronghold should im-
prison me?

Surely thou art content. No dream of thine
For mockery, because I loved thee not,
Could have matched bitterness with this, this
spell

That holds me fast, in answer to my prayer.
For had my sire Peneus taken thought
To put upon me some enchanted shape
Of river-waters, that had been glad life!
I would have fled, for very joy of flight,
Down the cool dusk of Tempe with the days,
Singing and singing to the reeds that sing,
Free as I was of old, and yet more free
From such as thou. . . . I would have laughed
aloud

With all the laughing leaves — yet loitered not,
Ever apace with time that never stays, —
Forever wingèd with a glad escape!
None should have followed, save the breathless
wind,

As some slim hound that follows to the chase.
 I would have pricked the darkness like a star,
 Holding forth silver hands of welcoming
 To the poor sweetness of the meadow weeds;
 The river-lilies should have stirred from sleep,
 Fain to set sail like little wingèd ships
 Against the anchoring root that held them fast.
 I would have called unto the untamed things
 That love the shadows: 'Come, four-footed ones,
 Come hither, hither! Drink ye, — be at peace:
 Daphne, who hunts you not, would pledge you
 love

In this cool gift.' . . . I would have fed the roots
 Of growing things, — of wistful trees that lean
 Unto the water, even as I, — as I
 That am not Daphne, but a thirsty tree.
 Ay me, for rain!

When did I think to stand
 Blinded with twilight, reaching out vague hands
 Through small, thick shadows, — listening with
 all leaves,
 Soft breathing in the sky, in wait for her,
 My lady Moon? Hath she forgotten me?
 Since nev̄ermore I serve her in the day
 At chase, before she leave her pleasuring

To measure us the night. When will she come?
 Even at the close of such a fevered day,
 But happy then, I lingered through the woods,
 Weary with hunting; and I laid me down
 Under the shelter of a little tree,
 And left it without thanks. I did not know
 It was my sister made me welcome there.
 Ay me, for rain! . . . I had not ever thought
 To look so long upon a careless cloud
 Grazing on light, in pastures of the sky;
 I had not thought to tremble, when it came,
 For joy of all the bounty of glad rain,
 Thrilling my leaves to laughter, as the hands
 Of a minstrel thrill the harp-strings, that the
 breath
 Of a new life awakes them, and they sing, —
 Sing, and give back the joy in rain of song.

Yea, thou art lord of singers, Apollo. Yet
 Think not I bend. For Song is lord of thee,
 Song, that is thrall not to the deathless gods,
 But bloweth ever as the uncaged wind, —
 Strong shaper of the Earth, and measurer
 Even of thy strength, Apollo! Yea, I know;
 Song, the first-breath, that bloweth through us all,
 Encompasseth the universe and thee, —

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Even Olympus also. Am not I
A little part of all this life of the Earth?
Have I not heard the dim and secret thing
Our Mother whispers, even in her sleep?
Once I had given no heed: now, being held fast,
With sad roots ever seeking in the dark,
And leaves at parley with the nights and days,
I feel her heart abeat, and, being her own,
I know. Then crown thy lyre, if thou wilt so,
With my unwilling leaves. And let them be
Symbol, to men, of triumph; nay, but hear; —
To thee, memorial that I whisper now:
The eternal thing thou shalt not overtake,
Token of Daphne whom thou couldst not thrall,
And Song that hath the sovereignty, — not thou!

ORPHEUS IN HADES

DOST thou remember how, before he
came,
None might have said unto another
Shade,

Dost thou remember? Lethe held our hearts
As snowfall covers chill the wearied roots
Of bloom once live, and glad, and full of breath,
When all the Earth is stark and white with
dream,
And men say, 'It is dead.' . . .

But when he came
The trance of snow was troubled. Like the
Spring,

I felt sweet stir of long-forgotten roots,
Soft wakening in darkness, and afraid.
Ever the air grew warmer, drew a breath
Against the immortal heart-throb of the strings;
Till with some portent like a thunder-burst,
My sleep was rifted. . . . There stood I, agaze,
With them that gathered round him where he
sang,

Bright as a torch in the bewildered eyes
Of wistful hearers, pressing close, to melt

The lonely peace away I took the heart
Out of my bosom, like a frozen bird,
To cherish it before the living glow:
And it awoke.

And I remembered all.

O FAR-OFF ROSE

O FAR-OFF rose of long ago,
An hour of sweet, an hour of red,
To live, to breathe, and then to go
Into the dark ere June was dead!

Why say they: Roses shall return
With every year as years go on.
New spring-time and strange bloom, my rose,
And alien June; but thou art gone.

WORDS, WORDS

WORDS, words,
Ye are like birds.
Would I might fold you,
In my hands hold you
Till ye were warm and your feathers a-flutter;
Till, in your throats,
Tremulous notes
Foretold the songs ye would utter!

Words, words,
Ye are all birds!
Would ye might linger
Here on my finger,
Till I kissed each, and then sent you a-winging
Wild, perfect flight,
Through morn to night,
Singing and singing and singing!

THE SONG OF A SHEPHERD-BOY AT BETHLEHEM

SLEEP, Thou little Child of Mary:
Rest Thee now.
Though these hands be rough from
shearing
And the plough,
Yet they shall not ever fail Thee,
When the waiting nations hail Thee,
Bringing palms unto their King.
Now — I sing.

Sleep, Thou little Child of Mary,
Hope divine,
If Thou wilt but smile upon me,
I will twine
Blossoms for Thy garlanding.
Thou'rt so little to be King,
God's Desire!
Not a brier
Shall be left to grieve Thy brow;
Rest Thee now.

Sleep, Thou little Child of Mary.
Some fair day
Wilt Thou, as Thou wert a brother,
Come away
Over hills and over hollow?
All the lambs will up and follow,
Follow but for love of Thee.
Lov'st Thou me?

Sleep, Thou little Child of Mary;
Rest Thee now.
I that watch am come from sheep-stead
And from plough.
Thou wilt have disdain of me
When Thou'rt lifted, royally,
Very high for all to see:
Smilest Thou?

THE VIGIL OF THE SPHINX

A THRONG of stars that keep their watch
with me,
A Dawn that flings her roses in mine
eyes,

A drifting of the shadeless sand that lies
Along the desert's blank infinity:
From straying winds, the murmur of a Sea,
An oracle, that ceaselessly replies
'Eternity.' . . . And so the centuries
Come silently and silently go by.
Men came to listen at my lips, of late,
And baffled by the silence, still they pray
The story of a nation and a day
I dreamed of once. And, 'O thou Dumb and
Great!'

The mendicants within my shadow say,
Nor know I am not dumb: I only wait.

THE SONG-MAKER

THE starless eyes of sorrow
Why seekest thou, O youth?
Thine eyes speak that men call
the truth;

Thy songs bespeak fair morrow!
Thou camest from yon hills serene
Rejoicing; hast thou never seen
The starless eyes of sorrow?’

‘Nay, once,’ he said, ‘in shadow
A cold wind whispered me,
“The woman Sorrow, — there is she!”
And pointed down the meadow.
But when I crossed the fragrant down,
I saw the maiden Peace, alone,
Her fair face in the shadow.

‘The starless eyes of sorrow,
Men say, do never smile:
For me, the earth sings all the while,
The sunlight laughs Good-morrow!
And would that these my melodies
Might bid a single star arise
In starless eyes of sorrow.’

SONNET IN A GARDEN

DUMB mother of all music, let me rest
On thy great heart while summer days
pass by;

While all the heat up-quivers, let me lie
Close gathered to the fragrance of thy breast.
Let not the pipe of birds from some high nest
Give voice unto a thought of melody,
Nor dreaming clouds afloat along the sky
Meet any wind of promise from the west.
Save for that grassy breath that never mars
The peace, but seems a musing of thine own,
Keep thy dear silence. So, embraced, alone,
Forgetful of relentless prison bars,
My soul shall hear all songs, unsung, unknown,
Uprising with the breath of all the stars.

A CHANGELING GRATEFUL

[*To M. T. M.*]

HERE they give me greeting,
House me warm within,
Break their bread and share it
With the heart of kin.

Here the ruddy hearth-light
Singes not a moth,
Gives a summer welcome
As a red rose doth.

I would leave a gift here
If I might: not I! —
Like a homeless laughter,
Vagrant wind gone by.

But while I am a glow-worm
I will shine and stay:
When I am a shadow . . .
I will creep away.

AFTER MUSIC

I SAW not they were strange, the ways I
 roam,
 Until the music called, and called me
 thence,
And tears stirred in my heart as tears may
 come
To lonely children straying far from home,
 Who know not how they wandered so, nor
 whence.

If I might follow far and far away
 Unto the country where these songs abide,
I think my soul would wake and find it day,
Would tell me who I am, and why I stray, —
 Would tell me who I was before I died.

THREE SONGS

I

AH, but when June's gone,
Rose, where wilt thou be?
Not beneath the snowflakes
And a leafless tree!
'Where no wild wind bloweth,
Where it never snoweth,
In a warmer shelter than the South:
Seek me,
Find me
Upon a maiden's mouth!'

Ah, but when youth's gone,
Rose, and wilt thou bide?
Never canst thou blossom
In such wintertide.
'Where no winter cometh,
Where all summer bloometh;
Where the sunlight never may depart:
Seek me,
Find me
In her belovèd heart!'

II

My Lady bent her lucent eyes on me
As friend-like greeting,
And smote into my life, unwittingly,
At our first meeting,
With their most deadly sweetness;
Ay, 'tis so!

Thus hath she slain me with her fair complete-
ness,
Nor doth she know.

My Lady gave her snow-soft hand to me,
And in her fingers
She took my very life, full sovranly.
Now my ghost lingers
Here prisoned, all unwilling,
Ay, 'tis so,

Till she shall grant it leave to quit its dwelling;
Nor doth she know.

My Lady spake sweet welcome unto me;
And with the greeting
The world slipt into silence suddenly,
At our first meeting.
Now, unto mine ears,
— Be it so —

Nought but her voice breaks silence, all the
years:
Nor doth she know.

III

Shall I upbraid or praise her for
The graces she doth shed,
Who cannot help her dearness more
Than any rose its red?

Her beauty blesses from afar
Whether she will or no;
The constant shining of a star
In any pool below.

Whether her eyes remember me
And she be far or near,
She lives, — and cannot choose but be
My Dear!

NEW BLOOM

I HEARD the lilies growing in the night
When none did hark;
I knew they made a glimmer, dimly white
In the cool dreaming dark.
Nothing the garden knew, —
So soft they grew, —
Until they stood new-risen in the light,
For all to mark.

I heard the dreams still-growing in the night;
Nor was there one
That I saw clear, or, seeing, named aright;
But when the night was done,
The fragrances to be,
Awakened me:
I saw their faces leaning glad and white
Towards thee, their sun.

SUNSET

THERE in the west a dying rose
Burns out its life; and the petals,
red,
Fallen apart
From the golden heart,
Fade into ashes around it — dead.

One rose less in my garden grows;
Lo, the unresting Wind, that blows
Round the whole earth from sea to sea,
Gathers the one rose more from me.
Keep it, Eternity.

INLAND

THE ships they pass and sink, and pass,
Like dreams upon the edge of sleep.
The thought of them is mine to keep
As a dim pool may bosom deep
The whiteness of a star that was.

The ships they sail into the skies
Across a bright eternity.
And here, — as at a bird set free,
The caged birds, — far out to sea
The windows stare with haggard eyes.

DRYADS

HUSH, they were here. I caught the
gleam
Of white arms interlacing,
Like tangled lilies, tracing
A garland on a careless stream;
And through the swaying tendrils there
Came startled air,
Stirred to a dance, the wood with joyance
gracing.

The young birds ceased the day-long lilt
To watch them so enringing,
Like snow-flakes all a-winging.
The eager, bending branches spilt
A sunlight on their locks, leaf-wound.
And was the sound
I heard, a breath of laughter or of singing?

Sure they were here: for see the grass
Athrill where they danced thither.
But whither fled they, — whither?
Who wist this thing should come to pass?

A step, — a sudden fluttering,
As birds take wing, —
Then but the fragrance of wild grapes
blown hither!

WOOD-SONG

LOVE must be a fearsome thing
That can bind a maid
Glad of life as leaves in spring,
Swift and unafraid.

I could find a heart to sing
Death and darkness, praise or blame;
But before that name,
Heedfully, oh, heedfully
Do I lock my breast;
I am silent as a tree,
Guardful of the nest.

Ah, my passing Woodlander,
Heard you any note?
Would you find a leaf astir
From a wilding throat?

Surely, all the paths defer
Unto such a gentle quest!
Would you take the nest?

Yonder where the sun-motes are!

Truly 'tis a sorrow

I must bid you fare so far;

Speed you, and good-morrow!

SUMMER SILENCE

[*For E. L.*]

SURELY, sometimes, afield through summer air
She must have wandered, till she seemed
to be

Compassed with silence, saying dreamfully
Unto her heart: All dumb, — no sound is there.
Lo, then, the voice, soft-creeping from its lair
Of stillness — sudden tide of melody —
Horizon to horizon, murmurous sea
Of creature-song that held her unaware!
There's not a fallow silence in the Earth,
Nor yet in Love; although no living lips
Have set the tremulous wings of air astir;
Could she but hear, and know this wordless
dearth

A little seeming, faded to eclipse
By the enfolding heart that sings to her.

HAPPINESS

IT was before the sunset that I turned
From where the late day burned,
And climbed the wide brown pasture-lands
that run
Along the hillside; there the warm weeds purr
For comfort of the sun.
Some secret in their look
Led me until, struck through with love and awe,
I saw
My Brook. . . .
Glad hastener!
Though the high-tide of clover was astir,
And blue-eyed flowers leaned across the grass
To see it pass,
And the long-tangled tresses
Of water-cresses
Were misted with thin crystal understream, —
For more content
To small suspected presences, agleam
And then away! — yet ever diligent,
Untamed, soft-fluttering,
The little creature went on rapturous wing,

Loyal and changeful, feathered, yet at rest,
On its own quest,
Subtle as light and simple as a nest.
It mused among the shaggy weeds and bubbled
In broken paths, untroubled;
With such a tongue to comfort and beseech,
It won the stones to speech.
Long time I listened, pondered, with love-looks,
The ways of brooks;
When, feeling, half-aware,
The benediction-touch upon my hair
Of something fair,
I turned from that wise water happy-voiced;
And there,
Against the flush of waning afternoon,
Early, a dim moth-silver, poised
The Moon.

JONGLEUR

AH, ye that loved my laughter once,
Open to me! 'Tis I
That shed you songs like summer
leaves

Whene'er a wind came by.
The leaves are spent and the year is old,
And the fields are gray that once were
gold.
Heart of the brook, my heart is cold —
My song is like to die.

The windows look another way,
The walls are deaf and stark.
Who heeds a glow-worm in the day,
Or lifts a frozen lark?

*Warm yourself with the days that were;
Follow the Summer, beg of her,
But never sadden us, Jongleur,
Jongleur, go down the dark!*

FARE YOU WELL, JOY

NOW fare you well, my joy, that would
not stay;

Count it as nothing I besought you so.
The place is dim, the needy fire burns low;
Go hand in hand with the unheeding day.
It is mine own heart's fault that must always
Nest on the edge of all the winds that blow,
Forgetful that there comes a day of snow;
Forgetful that the young year must grow gray.
But joy's so rare that it has taught me thrift;
No moth lays waste my rich remembering;
And I may see, with quiet eyes uplift,
— Some even, when the fire takes heart to
sing —

The dusk all white with petalled snow adrift,
Like the dear ghost of young unburied Spring.

DEW-FALL

NOW the thrill of wings is brief,
Mindless of the sky,
Quiet you, my heart of grief,
Beating Why, and Why?

Let the morrow have a care
For the morrow's need.
Fade along the hush of air,
Burden of the weed!

Not to-night shall any leaf
Urge its way anew;
No more hope, no joy, no grief:
Only dark, and dew.

MY SOUL IS AMONG LIONS

HERE where I keep my vigil in the waste,
No wind doth come. For further loneli-
ness

The furtive wings of air, long wont to bless
My listening soul with their eternal haste
Through the unhastening years, no more have
graced

The silence, nor to blank forgetfulness
Smoothed the recording sand. No more, no less,
Stare back the foot-prints my own way hath
traced.

Yet fellowship is mine; the brotherhood
Of the horizon's lone infinity;
Dusk and mirage, and far as sight can flee,
Two shapes that crouch on guard (lest there
intrude

Hope of escape by city or by sea),
Two lions, sentinels of solitude.

IN TIME OF FAMINE

I AM the lord of all these lands
Forgotten by the rain;
Lord of a thousand outstretched hands
That guide no plough again.

I have strong gates at north and south
Against mine enemy,
And stalwart towers that gaze on drouth
As far as towers can see.

I am the lord of these that die
And lord of a thousand dead.
Look down, Lord God; what lack have I,
Save only bread, — bread!

OLD BROIDERIES

[*To C. H. B.*]

OUT of the carven chest of treasured things
That holds them dark and breathless,
like a tomb,

I lift these scripted songs of many a loom
That labors now no longer, — nay, nor sings.
And, one by one, their soft unfolding brings
Along the air some touch of ghostly bloom;
The tacit reminiscence of perfume, —
The uncomplaining dust of mouldered springs.
Whether it be from hues, once richly bled
Of rooted flowers, some magic takes the sense,
Or if it be that meek aroma, wed
To flush and sheen and shadow, shaken thence,
Or clinging touch of aging silken thread,
They hold me with a tongueless eloquence.

I marvel how the broiderers could find
So sweet the summer shapes that never fade,
Though some mere passing race of man and maid
Have paled, and wasted, and gone down the
wind!

Yet here the toilful art of one could bind
 No dream with tenderer woven light and shade,
 Than sovran bloom and fruitage, rare arrayed,
 Or listless tendrils idly intertwined.

Ah, bitter-sweet! For caged care to slake
 Its thirst with joyance of the weed that grows,
 The whim of leaf and leaf, and petal-flake,
 Whatever way the breath of April blows.
 And poor, wise, withered hands with skill to
 make

The red, unhuman gladness of the rose!

There is a certain damask here, moon-pale,
 With the wan iris of a snow on snow,
 Or petal against petal cheek ablow.
 It wears its glories bride-like, under veil;
 But shadowed, half, the blanchèd folds exhale
 Sweet confidence of color; and there grow —
 Entwined and severed by the gloom and glow —
 Dim vines to muse upon till fancy fail.

I wonder: was it woven in a dream,
 When, for a space, one dreamer had his fill
 Of perfectness, — all white desires supreme
 That lure and mock the thwarted human will?
 The worker's dumb. The web lives on, a gleam,
 Untroubled as a lily, and as still.

Ah, nameless maker at whose heart I guess
Through the surviving fabric! You were one
With potter and with poet, — you that spun
And you that stitched, unsung for it; no less
A part and pulse of all the want and stress
Of effort without end till time be done, —
The lift of longing wings unto the Sun,
Forever beckoned by far loveliness.
O wistful soul of all men, heart I hear
Close beating for the heart that understands,
Kin I deny so often, — now read clear
Across the foreign years and far-off lands,
Let me but touch and greet you, near and dear,
Cherishing these, with hands that love your
hands!

THE PIPER

P IPER, wherefore wilt thou roam?
Piper, wilt thou bide?

Here thou shalt have hearth and
home,

And neighbors at thy side;
Many flocks we'll give thee, too,
Piper, an thou bide.'

'Nay and nay! For one unheard
Calleth me to follow.

All I ask, a brother bird
Singing thro' the hollow;
And a friendly star at night,
And a brook to follow.'

A ROAD TUNE

O H, there is morning yonder,
And night and noon again;
And I must up and wander
Away against the rain.

The forests would delay me
With a thousand little leaves;
The hilltops seek to stay me,
And valleys dim with eves.

The mist denies the mountains,
The wind forbids the sea;
But, mist or wind, I go to find
The day that calls to me.

For there are mornings yonder,
And noons that call and call;
And there's a day, with arms outheld,
That waits beyond them all.

RUBRIC

I'LL not believe the dullard dark,
Nor all the winds that weep,
But I shall find the farthest dream
That kisses me, asleep.

THE GARDEN

BETWEEN two hard breaths of a parching
day,
I am rapt away
Into some unkenned garden-place,
Where for a space
Dust nor demand may reach, nor human speech,
Nor any far-off chime
From walls of Time.
But I wake up to coolness and the peace
Of cedarn fragrances;
And the remembered hush of grass made new
With morning, and with dew.
And all the darling trees of paradise,
Leaning anear, let fall
Vague petals in my eyes,
And hands, and over all,
Soft as the snow that fills the broken ground;
Till every wound
Is solaced; and no less
The air is thronged and white with happiness.
And still with one accord
They rain the petals down, soft blinding me,
So that I may surmise — but never see —
The Lord.

TO THE UNSUNG

STAY by me, Loveliness; for I must sleep.
No longing now may lift such wearied
eyes;

The day was heavy and the sun will rise
On day as heavy, weariness as deep.
Be near, though you be silent. Let me steep
A sad heart in that peace, as a child tries
To hold his comfort fast, in fingers wise
With imprint of a joy that's yet to reap.
Leave me that little light; for sleep I must,
— And put off blessing to a doubtful day —
Too dull to listen or to understand.
But only let me close the eyes of trust
On you unchanged. Ah, do not go away,
Nor let a dream come near, to loose my hand.

BEFRIENDED

IN sunshine and in rainfall,
For steadfast company,
There are the far-off, friendly hills
All unaware of me.

And when the Spring is over,
And when the grass forgets,
There are the little shadows left
As blue as violets.

The stars make shelter of the sky
With many a window-light.
The dreams that hide them all the day
Sing star-like all the night.

The winds come by from east and west
With pleasant passing words;
I warm my hands in sunset
And share my bread with birds.

THE ENEMY LISTENS

HOW long it has lain drowsing in my
heart,
The torpid fear, half witless of its
sting,
Who knows? . . . Yet haply He has smiled apart,
All-knowing and all-silent: ay, at this,
How it uncoils slow length, awakening,
And wakes to hiss!

Here may I lean and glory in my wings
While all the stars go singing, sphere on
sphere
Bound to an orbit; and with echoings
They set the darkness throbbing. Oh, I hear
How they all sing, to bind
Me, — where I poise and laugh at them like
wind,
But none too near.

If He be All in All, why stays He yet
To burn moth-wings that fly athwart His
will?

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If He be master, why has He not set
 A hand upon my mouth, to say, *Be still*,
 As snowfall dumbs the Earth,
 And with the leaves all laughterless, her mirth
 Falls brown and chill!

Why is He silent? For the seasons shift,
 A rainbow change of summer and of cold,
 And light and dark, like flickering clouds that
 drift
 Across a bubble, rose and green and gold
 All in a bright dismay,
 Before it vanish in a little spray:
 The Earth grows old.

Yet all the while unshadowed, I take care
 To lie in wait for eager ships that be
 So brave to follow, — hunt them to my lair,
 And drag them down, a-quiver to be free,
 With broken wings, until,
 Struck through with fangs of lightning, they lie
 still
 To feed the Sea.

Is He not vexed? Myself, I like them well:
 They coax me like the foolish nest, unsought,

Loath to be taken, that must ever tell
 Where music is. So have I often caught
 The winds, to pluck their sting
 And send them weaponless and wandering
 And good for naught.

Have I not stirred the swarms that work men
 ill?
 Ravelled time's work? Have I not laughed
 to see
 How they cursed Him, unwitting of my will,
 For all the bickering hate, when straight as
 bee
 Homeward at evening,
 With ruin laden every pest took wing
 Homeward to me!

What have I spared save those mad stars of
 His
 Because I would not come too near their
 song,
 Urging to madness everything that is,
 Luring to follow, drawing me along
 To follow, on the height,
 A foolish pathway trodden into light
 By all the throng!

Look how they all go timely, one and one,
 To do His bidding; they that might go free,
 And do His bidding!—moon and star and sun,
 Singing the spell that reaches after me.

They know not they are mad:
 Even the Earth, wan drudge, goes ever sad
 And bright to see.

I would not listen, — nay, I will not hear.
 So the sea-tides at ebb and flow may plead
 With sea-drift. So it is, if you come near,
 A world would whirl you whither it may lead.

So may the wind — who knows?—
 Urge all the petals of a doubtful rose:
 My rose, take heed!

I will not listen. Like a flock of birds
 Circled about the tamer, set to sing
 With hearts abeat to his unspoken words, —
 Wild joys, all bright and unremembering, —
 So it may be that each
 Has faltered, trembled, felt the tamer reach
 To bind his wing.

Is it His spell that measures what they sing?
 Some rhythm within His silence that they
 hear,

Whence all the echoes widen, ring on ring,
With all the irised light from sphere to
sphere?

Surely the currents start
Pulsing high tide from some immortal heart:
There wakes the fear.

Why does He tarry? Say I fear Him not,
Reach up and blow the stars out one by one,
Unleash, to exultations long forgot,
The planets He hath charmed: were it well
done?

Bind all the winds that be,
Shake meteors from their husks, drink of the sea,
Outstare the sun!

Would it avail? So I make shift to break
The enringing song and scatter it through
space

Like rainfall fair to see, — and if I take
The lordship on me in that desert place:
To be alone with Him
There in the void, among dead worlds left dim,
And face to face?

What if His silence waits me, like a net
Hid in the midst of them that lure and call,

Till I — I falter, tremble, and forget
 Glory and joyance to be tamed His thrall?
 Even now, on laggard wing, —
 Even now too long I listen, wondering
 If He be All!

ENVOY

THOU knowest, O my own Unsung,
I longed to speak a common tongue,
To set this reed

Unto the voice of Everyday
With its familiar yea and nay,
Unto the common heart and need.
Yet oftentimes, indeed, I seem
To dream; — to dream . . .
How over walls of paradise
The darling trees lean down to shed
A petal. And I wake, with eyes
Uncomforted.

Ah, Beautiful, be mild to teach
This newcomer the household speech;
So I some day with better grace
May take the bounty of the place:
Some day with eyes that know the years
I may have wiser words to sing,
Nor eat my bread with furtive tears
Of home-longing.

But go where lights and highways call,
To hear the soothsay of them all,

And rest by any door;
With hands outheld and heart uplift
To take, and welcome for a gift,
The one day more.

POEMS FROM 'FORTUNE AND
MEN'S EYES'

(Published in 1900)

THE SOURCE

I KNOW, whatever God may be,
All Life it was that lighted me
This little flame whereby I see.

I know All Strength did stir this hand
To serve somehow the poor command
Of whatsoe'er I understand.

And from All Love there throbs the stress
Of pity and of wistfulness
Both to be blessèd and to bless.

O Light of Light, that still doth pour
On star and glow-worm known before,
I am alive . . . for evermore!

THE QUIET

NOW the roads, hushed with dark,
 Lead the homeward way,
 I will rest; I will hark
 What the weeds can say;
Wondering in the afterglow,
 Heart's-ease of the day.

One day more, one day more.
 Ay, if it were new!
There the city smoke goes soft,
 Melting in the blue;
And the highways, vext with dust,
 Heal them in the dew.

Am I wise — am I dull
 To put off despair,
But because the mist floats up
 From the pastures there,
Like the fellow breath of toil,
 Warm upon the air?

One day more, — one day more;
 Ay, and what to come?

Nothing answers, though I doubt;
All the trees are dumb:
But the primrose stands alight,
And the flocks are home.

Underneath the little moon,
Sharp and sweet to see,
All the warm, listless herbs
Send a breath to me;
And the fields bide, in peace,
Harvest-time to be.

Still the shadows close and come,
Like a friendly herd,
And the summer twilight broods
Tranquil as a bird;
And the brook tells her quest,
By the silver word.

Still the murmurs overflow,
Fold me with a spell;
And the distance sends a call
Dimly, in the bell . . .
When to pipe, — when to weep,
Do I know so well?

I have seen drought and dearth,
Yet the Spring's secure;
And the work was long, and lone;
But the past is sure.
And the hill-tops see beyond,
And the stars endure.

Often when the thing I wrought
Wore not as I would,
When my need had left me bare
To the season's mood,
Yet the heavy heart in me
Saw that it was good.

I have seen Joy take leave
With a bitter guise:
Griefs have had a smile for me,
When I met their eyes.
Who shall know with what new gift
Life may make me wise?

Be it saviors of the dusk
Soothe my care in me,
Or the trees, that bid me wait
What the hills foresee,

There the fields bide in peace
Harvest yet to be.

Oh, the wiser way of them!
Doubt has nought to say.
Shall I reason deeper, I,
Moulded from the clay?
Rather will I trust the dark,
Heart's-ease of the day.

THE PSYCHE IN THE NICHE

I KNOW not by what way I came
To poise the silver singing flame
Uplifted here; and though I guess,
It is a lonely blessedness.
But bowered white with spherulic calms,
I see the wild-flowers and the palms
They offer — passing by the shrine —
Before whose need even I may shine,
An almoner of peace not mine.

I know not why it gives them ease
To bring me all their memories;
Or why I seem, to men forspent,
A mystical enlightenment.
But since 'tis so, be sure I take
Their sorrow, gladly, for love's sake.
I bind their burdens in a sheaf;
I hold my arms out unto grief
And hallow it, with flower and leaf.

I keep the broken things that were
Too many, for a wanderer:
The hope outworn, the heavier stress,
The savors of rare bitterness

From dreams too fine for daily bread;
And in my heart their wounds are red.

The spirit's mute indwelling tear
Is mine; nor could I hold as dear
The first rapt snowdrop of the year!

They pass and pass. And sweet it is
To guard unheeded mysteries,
Like roots that Spring shall bring to be
A thousand-petaled fragrancy!

And sweet it is to be the cool,
Forgotten haunt, all beautiful
For once, unto the eyes of pain
That, healèd once with living rain,
Pass by and never come again.

Sometimes the taper shrinks and flares
Beneath a whirlwind of despairs
That poise and circle, night and day;
And scarce my anguished fingers may
Withhold a little, lovely spark
From that fierce hunger of the Dark, —
The outcry of some groaning deep
Calling upon me without sleep,
That I let fall the light, and weep!

And weep I would . . . save that I must
The more, the more, lift eyes of trust
(As sometimes you may smile into
The folding sky, unanswering blue)
For very need of loyalty,
To something that I never see
But love, although it give no sign:
Some radiance hid, some Heart, divine,
That is far lonelier than mine.

I SHALL ARISE

YOU doubt. And yet, O you who walk
your ways
Glad of your very breath!
Look back along the days:
Have you not tasted death?

What of the hour of anguish, over-past,
So fierce, so lone,
That even now the Soul looks back aghast
At sorrow of its own:
The piercèd hands and stark, —
The eyes gone dark?
You who have known
And trodden down the fangs of such defeat,
Did you not feel some veil of flesh sore rent, —
Then, wonderment?
Did you not find it sweet
To live, still live, — to see, to breathe again,
Victorious over pain?
Did you not feel once more, as darkness went,
Upon your forehead, cold with mortal dew,
The daybreak new?

And far and new, some eastern breath of air
From that rapt Garden where
The lilies stood new-risen, fragranter
Than myrrh?

‘Death, Death, was this thy sting —
This bitter thing?
Can it be past?
Only I know there was one agony,
One strait way to pass by,
A stress that could not last.
And in such conflict, something had to die . . .
It was not I.’

THE KNOT

I DID not love you, and I ever said
I did not love you. So the end was told.
How did it happen with so strait a theme
The days could play their winding harmonies,
With ritornello? Oh, I hated me,
That when I loved you not, yet I could feel
Some charm in me the deeper for your love;
Some singing-robe invisible — and spun
Of your own worship — fold me silverly
In very moonlight, so that I walked fair
When you were by, who had no wish to be
The fairer for your eyes! But at some cost
Of other life the hyacinth grows blue,
And sweetens ever. . . . So it is with us,
The sadder race. I would have fled from you;
And yet I felt some fibre in myself
Binding me here, to search one moment yet —
The only well that gave me back a star, —
Your eyes reflecting. And I grew aware
How worship that must ever spend and burn,
Will have its deity, from gold or stone;
Till that fain womanhood that would be fair
And lovable, — the hunger of the plant,

Against my soul's commandment reached and
took

The proffered fruit, more potent day by day.

Oh, it was not an artful lowered brow!

The lifted eyelash would have seemed to you

Desirable, or shadowed backward look.

I warn you in a dream. My own heart hears,

Cold and far-off, unhastened, curious,

A sea-plant fed with alien element, —

Watching through twilight eyes some underwave.

Will you not go? . . .

And yet, why will you go?

GHOST

IF you are loath to have me standing here
Gray on your dark, a blur against the noon,
Why did you make me This? . . . I cannot
choose

But face you so with unaccusing eyes
Of knowledge, now I see you as you are, —
To wonder how I saw you as I did,
Too long unknowing. I am filled with wonder,
Poising between the Outer Place and you,
Held changeless with the laughter dimly here,
So sudden blasted. Yes, and I would go,
If it might be; but this one gift it seems
I may not bribe of death or destiny.
I cannot buy you peace with aught I have,
Even forgiveness . . . now that all is done.
That was the last way to be rid of me.
Not willingly I gaze on you and Hate,
With this same 'Wherefore, wherefore?' It is
true

The murdered heart will ever bleed again,
When one draws near: no other touch, but one,
Can start the bitter drops from dead amaze!

You who would have me gone — both then and
now —

I would be gone from you. And I would lose
This gleam of stricken laughter from my eyes;
Because death made me older, and I see
How little cause there was in me for mirth.
Only I never guessed; I was so dull —
Looking for love — and knew not of this thing.
I see all now. . . . *Ah, Silent One, how long*
Must we look on each other, face to face?

IN THE SILENCE

WHERE didst Thou tarry, Lord, Lord,
Who heeded not my prayer?
All the long day, all the long night,
I stretched my hands to air.

‘There was a bitterer want than thine
Came from the frozen North;
Laid hands upon My garment’s hem
And led Me forth.

‘It was a lonely Northern man:
Where there was never tree
To shed its comfort on his heart,
There he had need of Me.

‘He kindled us a little flame
To hope against the storm;
And unto him, and unto Me,
The light was warm.’

And yet I called Thee, Lord, Lord —
Who answered not, nor came:
All the long day, and yesterday,
I called Thee by Thy name.

‘There was a dumb, unhearing grief
Spake louder than thy word.
There was a heart called not on Me;
But yet I heard.

‘The sorrow of a savage man
Shaping him gods, alone,
Who found no love in the shapen clay
To answer to his own.

‘His heart knew what his eyes saw not;
He bade Me stay, and eat;
And unto him, and unto Me,
The cup was sweet.

‘Too long we wait for thee and thine,
In sodden ways and dim.
And where the man’s need cries on Me,
There have I need of him.

‘Along the borders of despair
Where sparrows seek no nest,
Nor ravens food, I sit at meat,
— The unnamed Guest.’

THE SURVIVOR

I WILL not drown my day in grief,
But I shall breast the tide, and know;
And knowledge shall not make me brief,
But I will eat thereof and grow.

One happiness shall not possess
The freeborn soul I was before;
But I will drink down happiness
With a good heart, and call for more!

My brain may crave for knowledge, chief,
Though I am more than brain indeed;
My present need will have its grief,
Though I am more than present need.

And heart, with hunger never less,
May scorn all ministries apart,
Imploring for its happiness:
But I am greater than my heart.

THE VIOLIN WITHHELD

I

THE Song, at last unfolded, curve on
curve,

Blooms to completion, and as lilies close,
Folds it in silence. So, with all the light,
It goes . . .

No echo more; the memory must serve,
O vain to hark! —

The sweet, unpitying reticence of night:
Silence again, and dark.

To hear a music waning from my need,
It is to me

Bereavement. So the native shores recede !

With all the faces dearest to a heart,

When it is time to part,

Not to be stayed, — fading relentlessly.

I watch the waters widen, I who know

How far I go.

II

All gone, all dark, the welcome and the dream
Of a lost godhead that was mine indeed;

Some source of all remembrances supreme,
 And common with the planets and the seed.
 Nigh to the heart of Light, I heard it send
 Light throbbing without end
 Through mist on mist, —
 Colors and calls and echoed potencies
 For earth and moon and seas.
 Hooded with tempest, hovered at my wrist
 The falcon lightning. . . . Oh, I heard and saw
 Familiar glories, greeted with no awe,
 But human tears:
 The ebb and flow of tide on tide of years;
 The days like petals budding and unfurled;
 The building of the World.
 And then the making, — from what troubled
 clay,
 Veined with the reddest dawn of summer day,
 Sun-kindled with the flame to be, to seek, —
 The Wonderful and Weak!

Then, for the little hour, a vagrant god
 Brooding upon resplendent memories
 The while he rests beside his path untrod,
 With shadowed eyes,
 I too — I too looked forth upon the Earth,
 A child of royal birth,

And felt the proud assurance of my own,
In face of all wild beauty; — none so wild
Or beautiful, but had for me, the child,
Some look of home; for me —
With stranger ways, and threadbare and alone,
And shod so painfully.
'I knew you, Glories, in some outer place.
Oh, scorn not me, you rapturous wayside face
Of rose, that hast the lore from that brown earth,
What it is worth
To thrill you so and flush you fairer far
Than human faces are,
Flushing so transiently.
Rich breath, the life I was and I shall be —
Some day when I am come into my own —
Looks on you now, through eyes that compre-
hend
Beginning wrought with end,
Or ever you were, and when you shall be gone;
(And whither, what wind knows?)
Yea, dear, my Rose.'

Clear sung. But while I muse, with eager eyes
on
The vision that fulfills,
The one wild-bee that showed me pathway home

Is gone with daylight: down the mists are come
To cheat me out of knowledge of the hills,
And hide horizon.

III

My Violin, if I could call thee mine,
Interpreter,
I dream all ways were plain, all lovelier,
Through that soothsay of thine;
And how I should be led
By the sure quest of such a golden thread,
Through all vext mazes; beckonèd along
Through Dark, a glory, — Silence, mother song,
Where harbors every omen that eludes,
The hidden tryst of all beatitudes,
All joys that none may capture or foresee.
And it will never be.

Oh, but some clew there must be here to wind
Through these appalling darknesses, that bind
The baffled heart in with dismay and doubt;
To lead us out
Unto a source, a first all-meaning Word,
Sure to enfold like some dear blinding hand
Of love shut in upon the rebel bird
That cannot understand!

Some farther voice must say
The path is there, though it be far withdrawn;
As if a child should point us out the way
To Eden, in the dawn.

And for the lives that own nor clew nor seer
To tell the meaning clear,
Whom Beauty startles as a newcomer
Shy in the door, — and they as shy to her —
For whom her foreign speech
Wakens a wistful pain too strange to teach,
For them the groping thought,
Unvalued and unsought,
Lives dark: until the chance interpreter,
The Song unfolding to a soundless call,
Most wonderful, says all;
At last, says all — . . . and then,
As lilies fold again,
Even with the day that shone, —
Is gone.

IV

Yet, is it wasted, that which wells unseen, —
Escape that might have been?
The voice withheld, can vision wither so?
Shall not the risen longing overflow

Unto the needs
 Of joyless duties, thronging parched and low
 Along the days, like weeds?
 May it not be, for them that find no speech,
 The life unlivd, the love unloved, the stress
 Of thwarted songfulness,
 The very reach
 Of heart's desire, the utmost urge of want,
 Shall find a way to grace
 Poor hours, grown dull and gaunt
 With longing for new day,
 For sight of some far place? —
 Dreamers of destined joy gone all astray.
 (Heart's dim possession that the hands resign, —
 My Violin, not mine!)

Ah, that which finds release when others sing,
 Dies never so.
 My World, thine own heart cannot hold the
 Spring
 Long hid. The grass will know.

LITANY OF THE LIVING

Death, thou hast taken.

Death, thou dost give.

We who outlive,

Lo, we awaken!

I

NOW that it is too late,
We watch, who never saw.
We listen with vain awe;

We long: we wait.

Time looks so desolate,

Time that we hoarded once.

And something blunts

The sense of leisure now, where none intrudes,

The ample solitudes

Of vacant days.

Come, let us consecrate

To his new state

Rich hours and hours with memory and praise,

Now that it is too late.

II

Surely we are grown wise

With these amazed eyes,

Yes, we are eager, glad,
 To sum up all we had,
 Remember, count and glory! We divine
 Full well our riches in the day of cost.
 All that we had, thou makest it to shine,
 Since it is lost.
 This, then, was he.
 At last we heed, — we see,
 Resistless!
 We see all things so clear;
 And where we heard not, hear,
 And love where we were listless.

*Death, potent Healer,
 Death, who dost give,
 Hear us that live,
 Unblessed Revealer!*

III

By the dear price we paid
 For hearts new made,
 Oh, by this searing light,
 This anguish of new sight,
 Let not our wisdom fade.
 Grant us to understand
 These near at hand: —

Oh, while the sand still runs,
To cherish and to feed
Their living need.
We frugal ones!
We who put off from maddened day to day
The word to say: —
We who are ever dumb
Rather than waste the crumb!

Sting to some human use of new discerning,
Our shamèd learning;
To greet all beauties, perfect or begun,
While there is sun;
To gladden and to thank all shadowed graces
In hidden wistful places;
To give, to give; to trust,
Before their hearts are dust,
And ours undone.

Thou showest where we err.
But O, Interpreter! —
Pointing the meaning of this piteous Book
Whereon we look,
Let us be wise some day to understand;
To understand indeed,
And see, and read, —
Free of the Sword, in thy revealing Hand.

EPISTLES

I

Memorable

MY Very Dear, the crescent moon
Will whiten soon,
A drifting petal, bitter-sweet to see;
And in the western sky
The golden islands lie,
Too far for me.

The tree-tops are astir:
Aspen and birch, and fir,
And pine the murmurer.

Beyond and still beyond, in that dim croon
Of fields that wait the moon,
Where the moths hover,
There stand a-muse for any primrose-lover
The lights that bide, —
A solace for the going of the sun:
Meek fragrances
Tacit and golden-eyed!

All, all and more than these,
The lovely Dark gives to the seeker's eye,
But one by one.
And I must tell you though I know not why,
Save that you always hear, —
My Very Dear.

II

To A. F. B. in Praise of Us

What are We Two? — that whatsoever way
We meet, at morning, noon, or eventide,
Though yesterday had seen us side by side,
A new year has come in since yesterday!
'*What's new, o' heaven's name, to do or say?*'
The elders wonder at us, open-eyed.
Care slips, and grief — the pack — is swung
aside;
And work must needs be done, but not to-day.

Aha! However 'tis, some sudden bloom
Of Arden bowers over us, serene,
While to the thousand murmurs of her loom
Kind Summer sings, a-making leaves of green.
And how we laugh, we lucky ones, for whom
Bubble all laughters hitherto unseen!

III

To the Friend that Was

Yes, you: the only one to say 'Not I!'
To the abiding query of a glance;
Yes, you who ever choose to look askance
At proffered hands of welcome, and pass by.
You know you cannot be my enemy
Longer than some poor cloud-time of mischance
Blots, by your will, the ageless countenance
Of a blue heaven that bids you answer Why.

But ah, the waste of time! And, once Outside,
How shall we see the futile raindrop, hurled
Into the bosom of that radiant daytime?
Yet must I grieve at any grace denied, —
For all the lost bright weathers in the world,
And the vain shadow on this mortal Maytime.

THE HEARER

I LISTEN; and I listen; and surmise.
I listen to all musics that may be;
And to the shapes and faces that my eyes
See.

I listen for the strains of daily fate
To merge into some large assurèd Song;
Yea! though belief, and hope, and hunger wait
... Long.

And more than all, I listen to the deep
Of Silences that fold it all around,
Petal on petal, to the heart asleep,
Sound.

Yet am I dumb: until She blow the breath —
Here on my forehead — of a spherul spring;
And Her eyes veil; and the near silence saith,
'Sing.'

THE WINGLESS JOY

YES, it is beautiful. . . . There is no man
Living who could have made the thing so
plain

For eyes untaught: and there his work is great.
He loved life best in marble. But 'twas Life,
Breath, impulse, passion — name it as you
will —

He chose apart from Dream. No paradox:
It's not the maker, primitive himself,
Who knows the beauty of his simpleness.
The subtle man, the thwarted modern man
It is who sees the old instinctive life
With eyes of curious envy; holds aloof
To study with delight the primal hues
And pulsing shadow and clear symmetries
Of stress and joy and folly, not for him —
Thought-hindered and complex. That man was
Niel.

But how he made her! I have loitered here
Along the gallery, of a holiday,
And watched the workmen passing, twos and
threes,

To see the sights, half-looking with grave awe
On this and that (freemen and yet oppressed
By some vague condescension of the air)
Turn back, to finger a companion's sleeve
And point at this. It needs no word at all
To tell the meaning of the Wingless Joy.

Unto the happiest life, the gods allow
But once that rapture tiptoe in mid-heaven!
And yet she is so sweetly made of earth,
The earth of rain-pure April — and her lips
Are parted with a human sweet amaze
To feel the sudden immortality
Of flame go singing, singing in her veins,
'Kin with the rose-tree and the wakened brook,
Made to make glad, behold I gladden You,
And all things lean to me! I cannot die.'
How simple, just to make her standing there,
Poised like a fountain, ever old and new!
And her wide eyes — some statues have no
eyes —

Rapt with the tidings of exceeding joy
That dawns for her, a vision half withheld
Of utmost, and unspeakable, and dear;
Herself so clear a heart, she cannot doubt!
For me, that woman wrought of changeless stone,

Darkles and sparkles with a living light.
 Her smile so questions something her eyes see
 And read again. Her revelation grows;
 And how the risen gladness overruns
 From her glad being, — sweetness of the tree,
 To thrill the air and hold it like a Voice!
 Some look askance upon that gift of his
 To seize ephemera and make them live; —
 Call it unsculpturesque . . . although his art
 Hushes the cricket-cry like thunder near,
 When they stand face to face with such as this,
 This Utmost Moment that outlives the years.

.

Wingless, you see. She has no other home.
 She loves her once; the single soul of her
 Knows but the glory of one day and night.
 She may not come and go, — nor hide, nor range;
 Nor find her any refuge in the stars.
 She walks the earth with lovely earthly feet,
 And when earth fails her, she can only die.
 How well he knew! . . . And yet he did not know.

You've heard the story. But you never saw
 The woman till to-day; well, see her now.
 And yet if you had seen her that first time
 She dawned on us. . . . A knock upon the door,

Half-heeded with 'Come in' — and there she
stood,

Full in a shaft of sunlight that the square
Small window of the hall let in, with Spring.
Her eyes unknowing, wide and unafraid,
And the whole outline of her edged with light;
Her hair, — you know that dark of Italy,
So black, it turns the sun to silverness,
And in the shadow, purples with a bloom
Of vineyards? And you know the brightness
held

In the warm shallow of a woman's ear,
So intricate and simple, — human rose,
But eloquent as not a rose may be!
Oh, yes, for that first breath, you may be sure
I thought the Vision must have given heed,
Quite mother-wise, like the Madonna there
Who holds her Baby ever in her arm
And listens to the prayers of all the poor!
This seemed so plain a challenge from the Sun,
Color and color! Such a little thing
Remained — to paint it merely — in the day
Of visitation! I was wrong, you see.
Enough of dreamers. . . . It was Life for Niel;
And it was Niel who saw her Beauty through
The clothing loveliness; and it was Niel

Who made her clear: — the elemental heart
That can drink off one rapture for a draught,
Mindless of meat and drink forevermore.

.

That first day keeps the fragrance more than all.
I know Niel watched her with his opaque eyes
Of thought, while she, her errand on her lips,
Unuttered, moved about half dreamingly,
A shy, sure presence; looked upon his work
And then at mine, with the first smile for me;
Stood back an instant from Diskobolos,
In a dark corner, then begged pardon of him
Speechlessly with a slow approving look
Of old acquaintance; passed the Laughing Faun;
Wondered somewhat, with gentle courtesy,
At the scant treasures that our walls could show
In those bare days (for we were workmen both);
The few old textiles, prey of moth and dust,
But boastful of their color to the last;
A sketch or two from dead, immortal hands,
And hanging near, a crescent in a wrack
Of sunset-cloud, my eastern scimitar.
Whereat she shook her head and drew her
breath —

As a good child helps out a fairy tale
With willing fright — and drew away from it.

Then catching sight of some more friendly thing,
Her eyes grew gold again with happy mirth;
She flung the shawl back from her little wrist,
Spread wide the fingers, tapered like a saint's,
And held them, warm and fresh, beside a cast
As like as death may be . . . 'So, here, — my
hand!'

Out came the errand then by single words,
Strange music to us, scattered mellow notes,
And then a rush of voluble sweet talk,
Like the first blackbird that a schoolboy hears.

I think he saw his triumph from the first,
This venture that would win the world to him,
While he made studies, and the problem grew.
The workman in him breasted, day and night,
A stretch of bush and brier and stubborn rock
Fit for a pioneer; — won inch by inch,
As none could do who did not see his path
Through one portentous struggle, to the clear
Far peak, star-confident. Niel was a man
Who bound the service of all elements
He came upon: himself unpitied slave
To his own purpose, — other minds to him;
This girl beyond them all. . . .
No, there is nothing hidden, no offence

Unightly to the world; — all far from that!
Of course she came to love him, to be his
As wholly as a dumb child must belong
To its interpreter. He had the look
That comprehends a man, and binds him so.
For Niel there was no mystery in men:
No need to be yourself adventurer!
Art for Art's sake! and keep your vision clear:
Lean from the gallery along with us
And watch the gladiators as they come,
And praise who dies the best! We are beyond
That rude encounter, beautiful to see.
He understood it so, and took delight
In nature of the simplest human scale.
The unknown essence only served to spice
Some little talk of self, across the smoke,
Late evenings; filled the place of reverence
Towards women of his world, elusive, fine,
Detached as he, between their ways of thought
And outgrown intuitions. Ah, he was
An Artist; and he saw as none else could,
The rarity of this intrepid bloom
Whose only speech was Being. There it grew
Wild, by the highroad! And he gathered it.

I do not know how much of it was Art,

Or how much more, perhaps, the constant lure
Of her young spirit for the curious mind.
It is not often that we see a heart
So near — and red — and empty. And to know —
To know for once, and show it to the world,
How golden eyes could darken and turn gold
From some new source of sunrise and of night;
To see a child-face grow before your own
Into the dream of womanhood in flower;
To know what words that simple tongue would
shape

For tenderness as foreign as its speech; —
To know what Eve could find in her to say
When first the lips of the first man made plea
Against her cheek, there in the garden-place,
Eastward in Eden — have you ever thought? —
Herself the only woman that she knew!
Did you not wish, along the gallery there
Only an hour ago, to take that vase
Of Cyprus out from all its fellow wares,
Into the light, where you could hear it plain? —
You said so, laughing, — where it could unfold
Its eloquence; the equal melody,
And the globed dimness, glass soft breathed upon
By ancient years till it is opal-strange,
And lucent as a drowsy underwave

Of green sea-water lighted by the sun;
 Perfect and empty: — with some use, be sure,
 Save to stand idle, even for us to see
 With eyes of worship. For the elder Art
 Had ever such near kinship with men's lives,
 To enrich poor shrines and sweeten peasant bread.
 So, why not make that shape articulate?
 Fulfil its longing; set it in the light;
 Give it the crocuses it's empty for,
 And watch the water, softly set ajar,
 Shake out the beryl lights and filminess,
 And gather silver on the April stems.
 The love of some men is not so unlike
 This woman fineness. Yes, all thought aside,
 To watch the beauty of fulfilment, close,
 With pleased and curious eyes.

I saw — half saw —

How Niel was making her the perfect Joy
 With all a workman's ardor of research.
 God knows I cannot tell what art he used . . .
 My voice is not the charmer's — But I saw
 He would have out the hidden strength in her, —
 Bade her be woman; — studied with delight
 The early largess of that southern dawn;
 Blew back the folded petals of the rose,
 Only to see! . . . till he could say at last,

'Look at me, Benedetta. So, at me.
 And can you look, for just the breathing space,
 As if you saw before you — but not far,
 All that your heart desired; — not too far —
 The dearest thing that you could ask of life?
 Yes, see it, try to see the Heart's Desire!
 His hands upon her shoulders then, for poise;
 And as she looked back dumbly (coming in,
 I seemed to hear her look) he tried too far
 What tenderness could wake. 'So, child,' he said,
 And kissed her.

The model grew like magic from that day; —
 The world knows how, and how it saw the light.
 At the first cry of that world-wide acclaim,
 She shared our little carnival with us;
 And kissed her radiant sister of the clay —
 Because she brought him fortune in an hour! —
 And kissed her own face in the faded glass,
 Saying, 'Yes, it is true, the thing you speak:
 The good God made my head and hands and all;
 He made me well. But you,' — to Niel, — 'you,
 you,
 Have made me much more lovelier than He.
 Oh, Benedetta! She is Joy indeed!'

.

Within a few strange weeks, how all was changed!
 After his years of shallow half-success,
 The venture won, the man's name common talk,
 And the One Woman of his finer world —
 Charmed from herself and stepping from the
 niche

To follow his new fortunes over sea!
 It seems a thing unreal, impossible
 To dreamer and to drudge. But so it came.
 On the last day I found him there at work
 Against the sudden break for liberty,
 Ready to go. I spoke then: 'Does she know?'
 'Who? Benedetta? Yes, she must have heard,
 These noisy days that I have been away.
 She is a marvel, when all's said. Without her
 It never could have been. I owe her all. —
 A genius for existence. . . . What she might
 Have been . . . in any other century!
 Well, she's herself: a glory. And for me,
 The thing is done.'

 I was still there at dusk,
 Unwillingly delaying, when she came.
 'The marble, Benedetta! It is sold.'
 She listened dully, creature of the South,
 Sleep-walking in some desolate new cold;
 Her eyes too fixed with watching. So: she knew.

‘Me — me,’ she answered slowly, ‘that is well.
You have your fortune of it. I am glad.
And you are going — where?’

‘New lands, — new seas;
Your country, Benedetta!’

‘Yes,’ she said,
‘It was my country: I remember it. . . .
And when you go, you take the clay with you?’
He laughed a little. ‘Say good-by,’ he said,
‘Like the good friend you are, and wish me well.
I cannot tell you what you were to me. . . .
I go to-morrow. . . .’ I have never seen
Before or since that day such eyes of death,
Wide, empty, gaunt — with all the light gone out.
He answered half, the gaze he did not meet
Even with his own opaque and buoyant looks —
Turned to the Joy and said, ‘Look, you are she!
Be proud of her, for she is always glad.’

For a strange moment, then, she stretched her
arms

Like one left houseless, saying, ‘*Is it I?*’
And looked at her two hands, and at the Joy
That smiled on her unwisdom, with great eyes.
And feeling, with vague steps, and sight gone dim,
After the doorway, — so she chanced to jar

The single hanging with its bits of steel;
And sound and thought struck home.

I know it was

A madness, not a purpose; nay, not that, —
Only the impulse of a tortured heart
To put some thing that suffered out of pain:
She caught that lightning from the tapestry.

.

My scimitar it was. . . . I drew it out.
But time seemed long with nothing left to do
Save bite the anguish back, to succor hers,
And kiss her poor sweet hands, and lay her down,
— The torn heart in her harshly sobbing out
Its redness, — and to turn her face away
From that transfigured vision of herself,
Still smiling on her . . . as it smiles on you.
And this is what she lived for! . . .

I was wrong

To call him Judas. How should he foresee?
The spirit is grown frugal in these days.
Who thinks to meet with spendthrift love and
hate

Out of a sonnet sequence? — What, at home?
Or in the street? Or in your eyes, new friend?
Suppose you set yourself, half poet-wise,
Half curiously, and beckoned by *What-if?*

To call up some far spirit from Without.
 Would not your heart turn cold to see it grow
 Reluctantly, — the never-faded eyes,
 The voice you disbelieved in, with, 'I come.
 You called? What would you have?'

And yet take care.

We are so quick to blame some Master Hand:
 We say, 'He made us and He moulded us
 To see us broken so!' It is the cry
 Of the stung believer; and it is the cry
 Of him who says there is no God at all, —
 Girding up in his heart the bitterness
 Against a blank, black space that should be God,
 And is not, only emptiness abhorred
 By Nature and her son! — We cry on Him.
 Oh, why not — if the Art be all in all —
 Say of the Potter, 'Art for Art's sake,' then!
 Grant Him your modern right to make and mar
 For the mere craft's sake, too; and let Him say,
 (Why not, why not?)

'I made this Woman here

*Of fairness from the clay of trodden Springs.
 Look you, lost June is in her. You can see
 In her young hands the selfsame primal glow
 That flushes in My gardens of the world.
 And I have given her the miracle,*

THE WINGLESS JOY 451

The beating heart within, the holy Fire.

*So, full of breath. . . . Live, suffer, — shine,
and die.*

Fairer than petals, go the way of them. . . .

I made and I have broken. It is good.'

DAILY BREAD

WHEN the long gray day is done,
Spent at weary seams,
Homeward comes my Heart to me,
With the flock of dreams.

‘And what tidings, ruddy Heart?
Shall we never share,
Hand in hand, the sun and wind,
Seeking all that’s fair?’

‘Not to-morrow, Dear-to-me!
Ours are parted ways:
Thine the spinning, mine to seek
Fortune of the days.’

Oh, and it is cold without
My own Heart to sing;
Oh, and ’tis a lonely way
My Heart goes wandering.

But I fold the web, at dusk,
As a maid beseems;
And my sunburned Heart comes home,
With the flock of dreams.

PLAY UP, PIPER!

PLAY up, play up, my Piper,
And play the timely song,
The song that never a worker
hears,

Although his heart may long.
It's we are glad to listen here
Who have but Yea and Nay;
But would you only pipe to us
The word we want to-day!

We heard your heart-break, Piper;
And oh, but it was like!
'Tis so — 'tis so, the ill winds blow,
'Tis so the sorrows strike.
But would you only pipe to us
The turning of the way,
And how it is you come, at last,
To pipe again, to-day!

The broken hopes of harvest,
The wearing of the rain,
The ailing of a little cheek,
You make us weep again.

But tell us of the wage, man,
You had for this hard day;
Play up, play up, dear Piper,
And tell us why you play!

THE COMFORT

AS I came down along the height
I saw the Evening Star,
Benignant, near, the nearest lamp
Among the worlds afar.
Oh, kindly close it looked on me
To keep us children company
With all love-looks that are!

As I came down along the moor
I saw the window-light,
Clear shining out across the dark,
A welcome to the night:
And these two glories, home and star,
The very near and very far,
Were like to one delight.

As I came by the valley brook
The fireflies hovered there.
They shed a slow, unanxious glow,
Poising in quiet air;
So constant and so near at hand
That any eyes could understand
Their starlight unaware.

Some kinship here I cannot read
Because it lies too deep:
But these three starry things I saw,
And mine they are to keep.
How like they were, some happy way, —
It shines through all the troubled day,
It shines on me through sleep!

CARPACCIO'S ANGEL WITH THE LUTE

I LEAN my head to hear each string:
We hum together, cheek to cheek,
And oh, there is not anything
So loud, but I can hear it speak.
And it is shapen like some fruit
All mellowness — my Lute.
(Wilt sing?)

My singing-bird that I love dear!
Above the sound of harp and flute
And viol-grown, the voice is clear
Brown honey from my little Lute.
I harken so to every tone,
Because it is my own.
(Canst hear?)

THE STAY-AT-HOME

I HAVE waited, I have longed —
I have longed as none can know,
All my spring and summer time,
For this day to come and go;
And the foolish heart was mine,
Dreaming I would see them shine, —
Harlequin and Columbine

And Pierrot!

Now the laughing has gone by,
On the highway from the inn;
And the dust has settled down,
And the house is dead within.
And I stay — who never go —
Looking out upon the snow,
Columbine and Pierrot

And Harlequin!

All the rainbow things you see
Understream are not so fine;
And their voices weave and cling
Like my honeysuckle vine,
Lovely as a Violin! —

Mellow gold and silver-thin:

Pierrot and Harlequin

And Columbine!

Oh, the people that have seen,

They forget that it was so!

They, who never stay at home,

Say, 'Tis nothing but a show.'

— And I keep the passion in:

And I bide; and I spin.

Columbine . . . Harlequin

. . . Pierrot!

RETURN

SOLDIER-BOY, soldier-boy,
Now the war is done,
Are you not a happy lad
To see the world at one?
Home again — home again,
Living, in the sun!

‘Oh, the faces smiled on us
While the faces passed;
And the cannon hailed the flags
Waving from the mast.
It was good, it was good, —
Ah, too good to last.

‘Now the streets are still again,
Still enough to fret,
Though the hurts you do not see
May be aching yet,
What we gave, what we won,
Most of you forget.

‘For however much I pay
There is more to owe;

And I must be doing still,
And choose my yes and no!
But friend to me or enemy,—
Who wears aught to show?

‘Taking orders from myself
Leaves me many ways;
And there isn’t much to choose
When a man obeys!
But a bullet keeps its word
When a kiss betrays.’

Soldier-boy, soldier-boy,
Tell me what you bring
From the wisdom of the war
Years and nations sing.
‘What is death? A bitter breath!
Life’s the hardest thing.’

WORDS FOR AN IRISH FOLK-
SONG

O H, my day is lone. May every day be
fair to you! —

Shining like the moon you are, too far
to see.

But I ease my heart with singing all my care to
you,

Where I cannot grieve you with the grief in me.

Here I wait and work; and never catch a gleam
of you,

And you never feel my longing, over-sea.

Ah, but Blessèd Eyes, such comfort's in the
dream of you,

I can stay my heart to earn the joy for you and
me!

LIGHT IN DARK

IT was the twilight made you look
So kindly and so far.
It was the twilight gave your eyes
A shadow, and a star.

For loveliness is not to keep
Unto the skies alone;
And though the glories may be gone,
The heart will have its own.

Some likeness of a dream is shed
From all fair things, too far;
And so your eyes have left to me
A shadow and a star.

A SPINNING-SONG

MOTHER Dear, I do not leave
Old love for a new:
This is older far than all,
If the stars be true.

When I answered to his look,
A little moon ago,
Ah, that early greeting woke
All I used to know!

Then I heard the Deep call
Round about our mirth;
Then I felt the Garden breath,
Older than the earth.

So we walked together once, —
Brow and brow as near,
Shining with the dew from off
Trees that held us dear.

Oh, it is no gypsy-light,
Bids me forth, to roam! —
But my own star in his eyes,
Wanting me at home!

MIRANDA

HOW could I tell, so unaware,
That it was all for you
The suns shed gold upon my hair,
And all the lost leaves shadowed there,
And deeps of far star-lighted air
Left in my eyes their blue?
But now I know that I am fair,
For you!

Oh, never doubt that whatsoe'er
Of beautiful for you
My mother April lets me wear,
Summer shall make it richer fair
For kindly Frost to see — and spare,
Till lover's charm renew.
Nay, Earth will heed the little prayer! —
For you.

THE BELOVED

I HAVE no mirror any more,
Save in belovèd eyes,
Where only I behold myself
Beautiful, and wise.

Oh, I am wise with all the light
The waking garden knows;
And I will lift my heart therein,
Blessed as a Rose.

GOOD-NIGHT

GOOD-NIGHT, my burden. Rest
you there,
The working hours are over;
Poor weight, that had to be my care,
And why, let time discover!
The evening star sheds down on me
The dearer look than laughter,
At whose clear call I put by all
Forbids me follow after; —
Free, free to breathe First-Breath again, the
breath of all hereafter!

Good-night, heart's grief: and rest you
there,
Until your own to-morrow.
Here's only place for that wide air
More old, more young, than sorrow.
And though I hear, from far without,
These caging winds keep revel,
Oh, yet I must bestow some trust
Where water seeks her level,
Where wise-heart water seeks and sings, until
she reach the level.

ENVOY

GOD bless this little share of bread,
This water from the spring,
The wayside boon of rest at noon
When we go hungering:
And as we shoulder care again,
God give us heart to sing!

POEMS HITHERTO UNCOLLECTED

COME

FAR from To-day, behind the hills,
Come with me, hand in hand,
Where overflowing sunset spills
A glory on the land.

Come see the Desert and the Plain
And hear what Shepherds say:
And let us fill a gourd with rain
To keep us through To-day.

VALENTINES

I

(To A. F. B.)

AMBERLOCKS and Ravenswing
Wandered hand in hand,
Singing about everything
They could understand.
Amberlocks and Ravenswing
Ever had a mind to sing!

Were they happy, were they drear,
Swift they told their mind,
Tho' they met no listener
But the hasty wind;
And the weeds, that could not choose,
Had to hear the oldest news.
Very, very busy they,
Making poetrys all the day:
Pointed stars out, each to each,
With no need of other speech,
Sunned their heads and wet their shoes,
Trudged the roads and sang the news,
(Since they had a mind to sing!)
Slept and went a-berrying.

When they had no thing to say,
Still they sang the livelong day:
'Nothing, Nothing, Not a thing!'
Amberlocks and Ravenswing.

II

Rain is here; winds are drear;
Crocus-buds are sleeping.
Open door, and lend some cheer
To the little Child you hear
Weeping.

Love is such a little child,
Simple altogether;
When you've kissed him once, and
smiled,
He will never know it's wild
Weather!

III

*To his Song: that It may bring Him News of
Her and That Quickly*
Little Song, come here to me,
Malapert but dear to me,
— Little Sirrah Song!

Shake thy wings of snow for her:
Dry thy locks and go to her;
Carol, chaunt or crow to her
But tarry not too long.

Thou must come away again,
Hurry home and say again
If she's red or pale;
If she laugh, or if she blush;
If she listen, in a hush,
As to Linnet in a bush,
Or a merry Tale!

For a dimple, or a frown,
Take thy quill and set it down.
Do not dream thereon,
While I hunger but for this:
Not a look of hers to miss;
And if there should be a kiss,
Up, thou Snail, begone!

THE LOVING CUP

I DRINK the morning off to you
Brimmed high with fresh delights;
And full as blessed and as new
Be all your days and nights!

We drank together from the brook
Before the May went out;
And still the boon is in my heart,
A magic for a drought.

Yes, free of Earth a little while,
We filled our kindred eyes
With all the nations do desire;
And oh, we should be wise!

So come, and welcome to you, Child
With eyes the heavens renew,
To find First-Morning every day
Wide for the heart of you.

And silver on her forehead, Star,
The dream of heights unwon;

And in her veins run ever glad,
The courage of the Sun.

And oh, — the Springtime, like a cup
Of love for gods and men,
Unto her lips and mine, fill up
Again, — again, — again!

ON A FLY-LEAF OF MY
SHAKESPEARE

HOW often, with the moment at a height
Of bafflement and effort too forlorn,
And my beleaguered spirit overborne,
Unfriended and at bay, in lonely fight,
Have I reached up, to grasp one shred of light
In needy hands; this book all human worn.
And felt the sun of some to-morrow morn
Fold my poor Present in its far, warm sight.

Ah, draught of rescue! Yet I do not need
To turn a leaf before that cordial glows
Through my discouraged veins, to warm, to
wake, —
Too childish weary though I be, to read.
Just as a wayworn soul may say, 'God knows!'
Here do I lean my cheek, for comfort's sake.

HYMN

DEAR Lord, Whose serving-maiden
I hope one day to be,
Touch Thou mine ears that they may
hear,
Mine eyes that they may see;
And let my words and thoughts shine white
With Thy divinity.

Dear Lord, Whose child I am, Whose Heir
I hope one day to be,
Give light to all belovèd ones;
Give Bread to them, and me.
And keep all evil from us here,
And some beyond the sea.

Dear Lord, Whose faithful Singer
I hope one day to be,
Wing all my songs, as Thou canst do,
With Love and melody;
And bid them fly unto the day
That Thou hast need of me.

THE REED

IT is not every one may blow
The Music through the reed.
It takes stanch breath indeed:
But would you so?
Outbrave the voice of war;
Or hail a star;
Or be so strong that you could keep unsaid
— While your heart bled —
One little word.
O Singer, never doubt you shall be heard!

PAN IDYL

PERSONÆ

PAN

SYRINX

A YOUNG FAUN

ECHO

CHORUS { FAUNS and SATYRS
 { NAIADS, DRYADS, OREADS

CHORUS

AHAI! Who are they coming like the wind
Out of the West?
Lean out, my boughs, and tendrils help
to bind
The loveliest!
O blinder than all maidens she must be,
That ever ran
From love: — for look who follows! Who but
he?
Pan, — Pan!
Iò Pan!

Ahai! More fleet than birds along the air,
A tameless maid!
O tameless maiden, would you be more fair?
Be unafraid.

Turn, turn and look; nay, hearken, but a word,
And tell us why
You fear the forest, or the forest-lord!
— Why, why?
Iò Pan!

DRYADS

Stay, Syrinx, hear his pleading. Stay with us,
Thou joy of Pan,
And we will tell all secrets glorious
The forest can;
Yea, how our mornings and our star-sown eves
Are glad through all: —
The trees are ever happy, though the leaves
May fall.
Iò Pan!

SATYRS

The foolish maiden that would flee from Love
With shaggy ears!
Is it his wild, bright eyes, wild locks above,
The maiden fears? —
More beautiful than beauty of the deer,
More fleet, more free: —
O happy, all things near or far to hear,
And see!
Iò Pan!

FAUNS

Come, follow!

DRYADS

Syrinx, Syrinx!

ALL

Maiden, stay!

Ah, never flee;
For thou art brighter than a summer's day,
And wild as we!
Come, follow, — she shall never run away
To wish us harm;
Up vines and bracken, catch her as we may, —
A charm,
A charm!

PAN

O Loveliest, O winged maiden, hear them!

SYRINX

Not I! — nor linger near them.

PAN

Stay yet awhile; the moth-gray dark is falling.

SYRINX

I hear Diana calling.

PAN

Thou art too fair to slay my dappled deer.

Thou art my prisoner;

And I will lock thee in green woods, forever!

SYRINX

Ah, never, never!

Have pity, sister Pines, —

DRYADS

— We have no will

Apart from his, since ever Spring began.

SYRINX

O Sisters of the Hill!

OREADS

Nay, nothing may escape the heart of Pan.

SYRINX

O, everything that is! —

CHORUS

We all are his!

SYRINX

Where shall I take me? — whither?

ECHO

— Hither!

PAN

The shadows hide her, — where?

CHORUS OF NAIADS

Syrinx, what wilt thou dare?

ECHO

Wilt thou dare?

SYRINX

O Maidens, maidens dear!
Push through the water-lilies where you hide,
And open wide
Your gentle eyes on me, and grief, and fear;
And take me to you, fold me in your sleep;
Or if the silver waters are too clear,
Hide, hide me deep.

And to Diana say
That I will hold her mirror in the pool,
Lost, silver, cool;
Her serving-maiden still, at dusk of day;
Though she goes far and bright along the sky,
While far beneath, forever I must stay,

I, no more I!

O hasten, Pan is near!
I stand at bay, like any hunted thing: —
To you I cling
For refuge. Hasten, — give me hiding here;
O maidens, give, when maiden hands implore!
And he shall hunt me down — and I the deer —
No more, — no more.

(Syrinx becomes a river reed)

PAN

Ahai! I've caught the thrush!

ECHO

Hush.

PAN

But whither flown?

ECHO

Flown.

PAN

My maiden, here but now! —

ECHO

But now.

PAN

Ai, ai!

NAIADS

— A river-reed!

O beautiful, a reed!

CHORUS

Ai, ai, a reed, — Ai, ai!

PAN

Were there not reeds enough, O cruel water?
Were there not reeds enough along the stream?
That you must steal my dream,

That fairest daughter
Of morning skies?
You, you who slip away like her, with laughter,
From Love that follows after!
Cold thing, with silver eyes,
You, — you who spurn
The lovely fire with hisses! You who turn
All things to scorn and flight! —
Yea, I had caught her,
My heart's desire;
And you must quench her like the lovely fire: —
Too bright!
O subtle water!

FAUN

O master,
Care not to grieve for her. Thy grief
Will hurt the buds, will blight the leaf.
Take heart again!
Tears are no more than summer-rain,
Gone all, to-morrow.
O master,
Leave this sorrow.

CHORUS

Ai, Ai, a reed!

FAUN

O master,
We'll bring thee all our nuts, our wine,
And honey, hidden in the pine.
Take heart again!
For even now, because of pain,
The leaves are paling,
O master! —
And sheep be ailing.

CHORUS

Ai, Ai, a reed!

PAN

O cruel maiden, nothing but a reed,
A reed beside the brook!
Without a word of pity for my need,
Without a backward look.
Were there not reeds enough to stir and
 sigh,
To murmur and to sway?
But you must needs away,
And never say
Good-by?

ECHO

..... Good-by.

P A N

Not thou! — Her voice, her voice!

E C H O

..... Her voice.

C H O R U S

What would he now? Take heed.

— To kiss a reed!

He gathers one — and others — green and
tall.

And now, with joy and speed,

O happy side-by-side,

Like maidens with the bride,

He binds them all!

Behold, Belovèd! For faster than she ran,

He binds the reeds with grasses all along:

He blows across the hollow pipes together,

Pan, to whom all belong!

O golden weather! —

Pan makes a song.

P A N

Ah, Dearest, is it thou?

FAUN

O master, pipe again; it makes a song: —
Hé, golden weather!

PAN

Ah, Music mine, to me the reeds belong: —
Sing we together.
Never shalt thou be gone from me, my
 flute;
And only when I have no breath to plead,
Shalt thou, beloved reed,
Be mute.

Dear voice, O sweet! I'll teach thee ways
 To comfort men, and mock
The care from all their mortal days,
 So unto every flock
The shepherd boy shall pipe and sing!
 And piping so, and singing so,
 East or west the wind may blow; —
The shepherd his own heart shall bring
 Unto glad pasturing!

Dear voice, O sweet! more joy in this
 Than I did think to know! —

More joy — and longer — than a kiss;
And still the joy doth grow.
Say not a word to me, but sing:
And piping so, and singing so, —
North or south the wind may blow!
Glad are the meadows for their king,
— And all as glad as Spring!

CHORUS

We heard a sorrow coming on the wind; —
Like wind gone by.
For sorrow cannot hold the forest kind: —
We know not why!
O master, we were sad; but now we sing
As summer can.
And when our leaves are gone, more leaves
will spring! —
— Iò, Iò Pan!

CHORAL HYMN

Gone is our grief in deeps of happiness.
We lift our sorrows for the sun to bless;
And down the air the little sorrow goes,
Like a strewn rose.

Our working day of care is laid to rest,
An ailing child on the immortal breast

Of sleep, beneath the white, immortal moon.
And care doth sleep, soon.

Our harvest and our gathered days we bring
To thine unending daytime at the Spring.
What more thou willest with this life of man,
— Who shall know, Pan?

Take us with all our petals. From our dust
Make April and new Maytime, for our trust
That thou wilt find us fair again with all
Things that fade and fall.

O golden weather of the world of leaves,
Where none can sorrow long!
Take to thee all that withers, all that grieves,
Where none can sorrow long.
Be glad, and all thine own are glad together:
— Tears are but golden tears in golden weather.
O golden weather, —
O golden song!

SONG OF MY GIRL CHILD

PURPLE of the shadow,
Silver of the swan; —
So her locks are dark around
The neck of Alison.

Blueness of all daylight
With no cloud thereon;
But a wild high nest of birds; —
Eyes of Alison.

Wildness of bird laughter: —
Bubbles, up and gone;
With the wind's hush, after.
So is Alison.

Ah, New Moon belovèd,
Will you be outshone?
Glimmer in, and look then.
Here is Alison.

JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES

I

DUET

WE have a Harp, and it is blue;
You tune it with a silver key.
And some days it is all for me;
Some days for Brother, too.
And it has honey-colored strings: —
But four of them are rosy red
And three of them are blue, instead:
That is how it sings.

Brother has a lovely, long,
Shepherd-pipe to blow.
But still, whatever way it is,
He wants mine, and I want his,
The way you would, you know;
And if we change about, why then,
We want it different again;
We want them to and fro.

*Brother, how can I hear to play,
With all your piping in the way?*

*How can I find the way it sings,
With you there, laughing through the strings?*

II

THE ARCHITECT

It had some twigs,
For roundabout,
And little feathers, in and out;
And here, I think he'd fit some moss,
And maybe tie a thread across; —
A ravelling from off the line. —
So will I, with mine.

And there was down; —
And there were strings,
And different little kinds of things;
And once a torn-off bit of lace
To make it softer, in that place.
And I'd have liked a Flag to be
On top of all. —
— Why didn't he?

But oh, it was a round one, his!
Though not so beautiful as this. . . .
Except three eggs, so greeny-blue;
All three alike, and speckled, too;

And they were new ones, I suppose.
... What shall I do for those?

III

LOVE-IN-A-MIST

Oh, what if I could only learn to read,
— To-day!
Why not? Oh, why? I know I could, indeed,
Learn all they say,
Those letters, ... if I tried;
And then beside,
If only once I wanted to be good,
I know I could!

And wouldn't that be soon?
The bells, you see, are ringing afternoon;
But still it's very light.
All in one day! Oh, wouldn't that surprise him,
To hear me read, to-night!

And when we hear him humming in the hall,
He'll never know;
But up he'll come to kiss me in my cot;
And then I'll call,
Oh, very softly, so, —

'Father!' . . . And he'll say, 'What?'

And then I'll tell, this way:

'You don't know what your little girl was doing

All the day. —

But I've found out just how the letters read;

And here is what they say!

IV

RITORNELLO

I make songs on the window-pane;

Songs, that I rub out again.

(Mother says we may.)

Silver things they are, like rain;

. . . Bright, and gone away.

Martha says, 'O there you've been, —

Where I had the glass all clean!' —

But I only say;

'You don't know what things they mean;

Nor how the musics play.' —

'Wash it off then, do, and soon!'

But I'll write another tune,

I made yesterday.

All the bells it was, — at noon:

And it went . . . this way.

V

THE HAPPY FARMER

And now we're hoping it will rain,
With warmness in the night;
And then a burning sun again
As soon as it is light.
For this is where we ploughed the path,
— And never left a weed; —
And sowed the corn, and strawberries,
And morning-glory seed.

And in between, it looked so bare,
I set that lily-stalk;
And then I planted bean-rows there,
All up and down the walk.
Oh, won't the path be lovely now?
Up to the very door? —
With all our garden for surprise
Where nothing grew before, —
Nothing grew before!

VI

THE PENITENT

Now I'm going to be good; —
Now, and all the day.

I'll do everything I should;
 Everything you say.
 I won't fresco on the wall;
 And I won't be rude;
 And I won't break anything more at all;
 Because, you see, I'm good.

Good as St. Francis and St. John;
 Yes, good as all I've read;
 Yes, every single holy one
 With a halo round its head: —
 Maybe for mine I might put on
 A holly-wreath instead!

For don't you almost see the moon?
 (And here she brings our tray! —)
 So bed-time will be coming soon;
 There can't be much more day.

VII

ALISON'S SONG

This is how my song goes;
 Wait till you see how.
 I'll say the way I think it is
 For I can't sing it now.
 It's just the way a rose is

With curly leaves around:
Yes, that is how my song will be
When I can make it sound.

And this is how my song goes;
You'll like to hear this one!
It's full of those bright dancing things
That go along the sun;
And it has little bells, too,
That edge it all around. —
And that is how my song will be,
When I can make it sound.

VIII

THE PAINT-BOX

Blue is my favorite color;
Blue is what I love best.
Violet-and-blue is my favorite too;
That's how I'd rather be dressed.

Yellow is Brother's, — think of that!
(Brother's a funny fellow.)
The Sun, — and the next-door pussy-cat, —
They're yellow. . . .

But blue is my favorite color
And I know it's Mother's too:

For the ribbon, now, in my hair, is it;
She kisses me more in blue.

Green is very good, too, for trees, —
Most of them are, you know;
Tho' some ways of pink I like, I think;
That's why I paint them so.

But yellow's the color our Bird was, once,
Juniper, — poor little fellow! —
And the Sun — and he — are the best, you
see: —
Oh, let's make everything Yellow!

IX

SIMPLE AVOWAL

I love you more than you do me,
Yes I do, I do!
More than the sky and more than the sea,
And more than Music too.

I love you more than you do me,
Truly, I do you;
I love you more than all the world.
(Would that mean playthings, too?)

I love you more than you do me;

Oh, I do, I do!

More than this whole Universe.

(Would that mean birthdays, too?)

THE HARPER

FIRST of all, I'll wake the Brook,
— Silver string! —

Then the grass, to lean and look
While we two do sing.

Then, before the people know,
— Silver string, golden string, —
'Twill be Spring!

All the trees shall breathe and blow,
Showering flowers to play at snow,
Over everything!

THE REASON WHY

O a right fine day was yesterday;
So I had to make a song.
And now the weather is grown so gray
That silence would be wrong.

For when we have to eat and drink,
Indeed we have to sing! —
Yet hunger urges more to think
Long thoughts on everything.

And now yon feather shed without
Upon my window-sill,
Doth summon me, beyond all doubt,
To use it, for a quill!

Oh, reasons are not long to find,
— If reasons man must bring, —
Why every man, with song in mind,
Should have a mind to sing.

And Life, it is so very brief,
And hours they are so long, —
If you would have no time for grief,
Needs must you take to Song.

A CHARM

YOU, first Star,
Beckon still to me: —
Dull and sad, or morning-glad,
Oh, if you would see!
What care I who else is by?
If only you will see,
And send a look to me!

STORM SIGNAL

AH Lord, the mist is all about,
The mist is white to see;
And earth and sky, when I look
out,
Make not a sign to me.

The hills were yonder, yesterday;
Surely they are but hid!
And yet the blank wall says me Nay,
And all the winds forbid.

And one by one, the lights depart;
The voices fade in storm.
And hold I must to my own heart
This day, to keep me warm.

HOLIDAY

GET ye behind me, Walls;
No more, no more of you!
Spring calls, and Maytime calls;
And songs come true.
(Ah, sweet Saint Apple-Tree,
Pray thou for me!)
Oh, once beyond the doors
The glory pours,
With messages for me.
There's only Life, to breathe, to heed, to see!
Only one call to hear;
From ferns, uncurling by the bubbled brook,
From trees that lean and look,
Small wondering grass, and little pastured lamb;
One never-ending, clear
I am.

‘WHOM THE GODS LOVE’

MY lad is ever gone from me.
The roads all beckon him away;
And all day long, and every day,
The wide world bids him come and see!
Unto my lad, the Spring we met
Was no more fair than any spring; —
A listless bud, a wayside thing
To strip of petals and forget
At some clear call from out a pine.
My lad, he is no lad of mine:
I think I shall not ever set
My eyes on his, again. — And yet,
My heart like some dull talking-bird
Learns not from sorrow, but must say
Over and over, one poor word
Against the throb of sad or glad; —
Over and over, all the day,
‘My lad.’

IN MEMORIAM

LILIAN GERTRUDE SHUMAN

(September 3rd, 1876 — February 2nd, 1913)

'As a lily among thorns, so is my beloved.'
(*The Song of Songs.*)

I

FEBRUARY 2, 1913

LILY of Paradise, new come to bloom,
O risen lily wakened to new air,
And breathing out your morning fragrance where

Immortal welcome gives your whiteness room;—
All hail, transfigured Wayfarer, with whom
The glimmering fields of heaven are made more
fair:

Though here the dark is on us, and despair
Of eyes that cannot follow through the gloom.

The world is wrapt in silence, even as you.
No sound, no sign; — saving where Lost Hope
cries,

Striving against the sword, — *It is not true!*
Darkness for us; for you, divine surprise; —
O Lily of a soul, so young, — so new
Unfolding to the day, in Paradise.

II

FEBRUARY 4TH

What could it mean? — That breath-held elo-
quence

Of lilies, lilies, — ivy intertwined
Of violet, rose, and all their gentle kind,
With wordless gaze and living frankincense?
And everywhere the sweet bewilderments,
Of cloistered flowers, — mute wisdom undi-
vined, —

To hold in bondage so the stricken mind,
And numb the query of the striving sense.

Silence and dusk, and fragrance; never stirred
By any mortal breath, to break the spell.
The moments throbbing as a wounded bird;
And time all heart-beats, breaking for farewell:
Till the hour struck, in one high silver word, —
The 'Holy — Holy,' of a sanctus-bell.

III

HER VIGIL

O not of her, this silence and this cold; —
First of all comers to a wounded heart!
First to divine the springs where tears may start,

Before another could have said 'Behold!'
 Not of her tender ways an hundredfold, —
 Waylaying sorrow so with darling art,
 That all might laugh — not any weep — apart;
 Nor any grief escape her, unconsolated!

Now first, O Vestal Keeper of the flame
 That hallowed home, the white fire holds its
 breath: —

That shrine and vigil, ever more the same,
 Her strong hands yielded never, unto death.
 Fail not, sweet fire: burn loyal to her name: —
 Listen, white flame, to what the Spirit saith.

IV

LEAVES

The little leaves she loved were on their way;
 The little leaves pushed out, athirst for light:
 Quick leaves and blind, unwitting of the blight
 That lay in wait behind the radiant day.
 And budding hope, as blessed blind as they,
 Leaned to the sunlit sea-ways full in sight! —
 Lo, round the world this sevenfold veil of
 white; —
 And stricken seas, and hope, a castaway.

Go back, small leaves; before the blighting year
Lay waste all eager buds that ever grew.
Let not the leaves be hurt she held so dear, —
Nor one small thing of comfort Spring may do!
So may it be, — when we have ears to hear, —
You leaves shall sing of her, who sang of you.

V

GRAY

Ah, and gray days she loved; and gray of rain;
Gray of the dawn, and gray-lit sky of spring;
And the sea-morning's soft apparelling
That folds the glittering reaches of the main. —
And why such praises, Dear, — again, again,
But for that hush of color? Did you sing
The grace and shelter of the folded wing,
Because it was your spirit's own refrain?

Or was it, that you loved the lowliness
And calm of mist, for what the light might do?
Even as the Moon may love her cloud no less,
But more, for her soft mirth of shining through?
For I have seen her so look out, to bless, —
The young cloud-parting Moon, yes, even as
You.

VI

HER LOOK

Out of the twilight, glimmer now, dear Face:
Wide brow, all-heedful, — save alone how fair;
And drooping head, and heavy wreathen hair;
And brooding eye-lids with their level grace.
Under those lids, close Truth alone might trace
The lights of laughter and the shade of care;
Eyes long withdrawn, then quick uplifted there,
With stars out-looking from a shadowed place.

But closer than the starlight in the pool,
And eloquent of all her soul's commands,
Those fingers nobly shapen, — flower-cool
Of touch, that any blind one understands!
Praise to the Heart of the All-Beautiful,
For those, her beautiful and holy hands.

VII

HER PRESENCE

And this I know. You could not, Dear, be you,
And leave one heart of yours uncomforted.
No, not for death. Love ruled your heart in-
stead;

With fearless faith the one command it knew.
Still, — like unresting birds, your words beat
through

The echoing shadow — ah, your words unsaid! —
All querying, all endearment yet unshed, —
*‘What lack you, Dear? — What else that I may
do?’*

Sweet Eyes, that never smiled so much for mirth
As all for loving, (Love forgets not how!)
Forgive it, if the dark of present dearth
Make dim to us your over-leaning brow;
Sweet Eyes, compassioning the griefs of Earth,
Then, while the noon-day was; — and now, and
now!

SONG

WHERE is my Beloved gone? —
— That she could forget
How our hearts are left alone, —
How our tears are wet?

‘Never could she seek so far
But her heart was near;
And her troth a guiding star,
Even there as here!’

Who can show the path to her?
‘Ah, poor hearts astray,
Ye must rise and go to her
By the selfsame way.

‘Leave your dark of yesterday, —
Would you understand:
Cast the trembling selves away,
Would you touch her hand.

‘Oh, the path is clear to sight,
And the speech thereof; —
All her ways are ways of light;
And her words are love.’

TO ALICE BROWN

AND is it sweeter to be
Crowned, at the end,
So, for the weaving of dreams,
Or as a Friend?
Famed for the shaping of tents, whose passing
guest
May find a pictured rest?
Or as a Friend
Whose one hearth-fire shall beacon all the way, —
Or wilderness?
Not yours to choose, O Lady of this day.
Both gifts are yours; and we here at the door,
All we are yours, who come full fain to bless
With little offerings of our hearts' desire!
All we who crowd to warm ourselves before
Your fire.

GROWING

YES, I will grow like a tree.
Nothing shall keep me from waking,
Down in the dark, and breaking
Out of the earth, to see!
Feeling with eager fingers
After an unseen light,
Warm through the chill that lingers,
Lifting me out of night,
Up towards the day's out-breaking.

Yes, I will grow like a tree;
Nothing shall keep me from growing,
Nothing shall hold me from knowing
The sun that is calling me.
Ever apace with time,
Up through the earth, rain-fed,
Nearer the glow I climb,
Hearing, above my head,
Laughter of life over-flowing.

Up from the things that creep,
After the light and the singing!
April what are you bringing?

I have awakened from sleep.
Come, I have toiled, aspire,
O, and the thirst is mine
Ever to journey higher
Unto the wide divine
Air, where the winds go winging!

Bud, have you pierced the sod?
Here in a glory of wonder,
Where all the shadows sink under
The living garden of God?
Ah, what a mighty patience
Fed all the trees that won
To these thousand-fold exultations, —
Toiling to find the sun,
Till they clove the dark asunder!

I will arise and climb, —
Higher to higher growing.
Hail to the four winds blowing,
And a good-morrow, Time!
If I but grow, for speech,
If I sing leaves, not words,
Yet will I call and reach,
O I will shelter the birds: —
Yes, I am here — and growing!

HOMeward

DO you hear the bells of twilight
 Ringing clear, along the air?
For they call the ships to haven
 And the workers all from care.
And the birds are done with flying,
 And the hush is over all;
While the flocks are trooping homeward,
 And the herd-bells, too, do call:

Good-night, good-night, my burden;
 Good-morrow with the sun!
Good-night to you, my journey;
 The longest day is done.

REFUGEE

O VER the stones, over the bridge, over the
sea,
After my heart went I; and followed on
Slow body after me.

After the gold, — the isle of rose; after the fall
Of folding gray, — to find if that might be,
The end of all.

Into the west, into the last of beckoning light;
Till the shed star made sudden lilies grow
In pools of night.

THE WIND

THE Wind against the bolted door
Cried out '*I will — I will!*'

.
And sobbed. — And then lay still.

THE NEW-BORN

THERE will be no more death;
There will be no more pain.
I fought them: they lie there;
Slain.

Up through the halls of time;
I fought: I overcame.
From the blind Dark beneath the world;
And through the shouting flame.

To win this body bright,
This sheath to hold its lord;
Treasure of breath and being;
Mightier than the sword.

And sundered soul and body,
From death on death of pain
Rose up to serve this conquering Life,
Even as servants twain.

O, far and filled with tidings,
Some air of Earth blows sweet;
But here are songs from star to star;
And the Sun beneath our feet.

THE JONGLEUR AT LAST

I THRUST aside the crowding stars
That jangled loud as jays.
And the score of spears, that round
 my ears
Pointed me out my ways.

A pretty pass it was, to see,
Before their circle broke.
The bright air goes through my torn heart
And in and out my cloak.

And good it was, and light to go,
While such a press came by:
Tho' as I went, like one forspent,
I saw my body lie.

One backward look I flung to him,
And back he looked at me:
Nor ever stirred — nor spoke one word —
While I slipt out, scot-free!

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